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Immortability

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# IMMORTABILITY

## *An Old Man's Conclusions*

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THEOLOGICAL SEMI

BY

S. D. McCONNELL, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.

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TO

M. L. S.

FOR HERE : AND HEREAFTER

*"For man is, according to nature, mortal, as a being who has been made out of things that are perishable. But on account of his likeness to God he can by piety ward off and escape from his natural mortality and remain indestructible if he retain the knowledge of God, or can lose his incorruptibility if he lose his life in God."*

St. Athanasius

# IMMORTABILITY

## CHAPTER I

I am eighty-five years old. I cannot expect to live many more years. Then I will be dead. Either in the furnace or the grave my body will be dissolved into its material elements. Will anything survive? If so, what?

Maybe I had best leave the question unasked, inasmuch as no answer has yet been found. And this not for lack of search. The usual arguments and analogies are not convincing. I have read scores of books on the subject and have learned from them just nothing at all. So far as positive information is concerned I am no better off than was Job or Plato or Pilate. I do not hope for much. I know that proof is unattainable. But I cannot dismiss the matter with old Omar;

> Myself when young did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and Saint and heard much argument
> About it and about—but evermore
> Came out by the same door that in I went.

No: myself when young could sit down content with "the jug of wine, the loaf of bread and thee."

But the jug is empty, the bread is eaten and she died sixty years ago.

But I find myself asking, Do I really want to survive? If the offer were made me to relive here the fourscore years of which I have had experience I would be at a loss what to reply. It has probably been an average life, a mixture of pleasure and pain. But there is no system of accounting by which one can strike a balance. In the cup of life, however clear its content may be, a single drop of pain has the quality to discolor the whole, while a drop of pleasure disappears in it unnoticed. In any case this is only an empty speculation. The offer is not open to any; and if it were, not all would reply the same way.

If anything survive it can only be that aggregate of consciousness which is "I." Moreover, the question only has significance on the condition that the consciousness which should pass on shall be continuous. If death be a river of Lethe to wash away the remembrance I have no interest in the matter. A break in the stream of conscious identity would be fatal. Maeterlinck has made an engaging and powerful argument for an impersonal immortality, but it is not convincing. If it did convince it would empty the matter of personal interest.

And the problem must be still further limited. It is not "eternal life" which is in question. Eternity is a long while. Within it there may be space for a thousand transformations as great as from this life to the next. It is starkly, "Shall my soul perish with my body?" Or shall it in any wise, any guise, survive even for an hour, for an age, or conceivably until it undergo successive changes of conditions as great as the passage from this one to the next? But its only interest lies in the provision that it shall be *my* soul, with memory and self-consciousness unbroken.

But am I sufficiently satisfied with myself to wish for me an eternal or even a continued existence? The crowning misery of my long life has been dissatisfaction with myself, the self-disgusts, the thoughts, emotions, acts, which I loathe but which are part of myself, the *character* which betrays me again and again, but which I cannot disown—could these be left behind and identity remain? True the old Catechism declares that "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness"! Surely an idle fancy. There can be no purifying power in the act of dying. The sweet serenity in the face of the dead whose life has been evil and turbulent would almost persuade us that the evil of life is in the spirit which is gone rather than in the flesh which remains. "Made perfect in holiness?" Would I recognize myself after such a transformation? Would I care for myself? Should anyone who knows me now know or care for me then? To those who love me my faults are part of myself. They are of the warp and woof of the personality they love. To be myself I must survive with all my imperfections on my head. Lacking them my personality would be transformed and their love find no point of attachment.

This is the consideration which makes the popular idealization of those who have passed beyond so unreal. They are no longer human beings but creatures of another order with whom we can have nothing in common. In spite of its pathetic and childish triviality, Sir Oliver Lodge's Raymond is more convincing than all the saints of the hymnbook paradise. He is at least human while the others are as remote as their stained glass representations.

But this matter of continuous self-conscious personality has very perplexing implications. Suppose my "soul" to pass on with memory and self-consciousness unbroken, with the same faculties as now, with fit organs for their expression, how could life express itself under such conditions? Of "disembodied spirit" humanity knows nothing. No such phenomenon has ever come within its experience. All it knows or ever has known of spirit has been in connection with organized matter. "Spirit" in the abstract is unknown as "Life" in the abstract.

Whether they are identified or whether they be distinct entities they are known only as phenomena associated with material organisms.

Can a "disembodied" human spirit exist at all? Of what coherence? What sensations would be possible to it? In personal experience, one is indeed conscious of moods and feelings which appear to have their source in some region apart from the body. But they are evanescent, incoherent, little more than inchoate emotions. Would any more be possible to a disembodied soul? The extent to which soul and body coalesce is seldom realized. It may or may not be true that "the brain secrets thought as the liver secrets bile," as Cabanis said. Much contention has revolved about this point. But the real question is far deeper and more subtle. Granted that the soul has an independent subjective existence of its own. Granted that it may disentangle itself from the disintegrating body, the real problem is: What is possible to the soul *as such?* It concerns the nature of spirit.

In his *Evolution Creatrice,* Bergson has shown that the Intellect can function only in terms of matter. It is true that what we call the intellect is one portion, or one aspect of that complex we call the soul, but it is implicated in all its sensations and actions. It apprehends only material forms. It is Euclidian. All its concepts are based on material forms. It is not alone that it is coexistent with the body but that without material forms it ceases to act. Can a conscious mind, for example, think without language? But practically every word of human speech comes from and rests upon a material object, a physical act, a material state. However abstract the word may have become, the material image is always present beneath or around it. Can we conceive a disembodied spirit carrying with it through eternity a physical memory in a realm where physical phenomena are not? How could it consciously touch existence? Lacking a body, would anything be possible to it save a few vague, formless sensations?

Those who denounce materialism in the interest of spirituality misread the nature of spirit. So far as we can know, there has never in all time been a single communication between one human intelligence and another, except through a material medium. Such a possibility is conceivable, that spirit might be attuned to spirit so finely that one would respond directly to the other. If so it could only be independent of time, space and matter. But this leads into a region where thought cannot function and only dreams are real.

So it comes to pass that when I face the elemental facts of existence, a new life for my soul seems impossible. This is not alone or chiefly because of the interdependence of soul and body as they now exist but because, so far as we can know, it is an elemental quality of spirit that it cannot function apart from matter. In this direction there seems to be no thoroughfare. Am I then to rest content with the eighty-odd years of conscious existence which I have had? I acknowledge that I have no claim upon anything further. But rightly or wrongly I cannot be satisfied so. I must reëxamine the situation to see if there is not some avenue discoverable. Whatever the material universe may be, "I" am surely something apart and different. But in order to dispel my doubts and fears I must confront all those considerations which would frustrate my hope. I must also weigh and evaluate those reasons, arguments and analogies so generally proffered in proof of immortality.

It is true that my self-consciousness sets me over against the material universe as something apart and different. But the only existence I am immediately aware of is material. Self-consciousness is not the primary fact. The new-born human is conscious of the world long before he is conscious of himself. My psychical existence is second both in time and experience. Moreover the content of my consciousness is composed of material things. The essential "I" lives and moves among these things. The motives and impulses which dominate my life have their origin in material realities. All human, indeed all living action resolves about two foci, the urge of *self-preservation* and the urge of *propagation.* From the first of these, from the sensation of hunger and pain come most of the activities of man and animals alike, labor with its weariness of soul and body, commerce and trade with their anxieties, dress and adornments with rivalry and jealousies, in a word all the myriad activities of the world in which I have my being. In this roaring loom of life my soul is enmeshed, woven into its fabric, patterned and colored by its weaves and its dyes. What manner of life would it sustain with all these things left behind and emptied from the memory?

Again, consider the imperious instinct of propagation, that impulse compounded of spirit and body, in its highest experiences transcending matter, the spring of the noblest and basest impulses of the soul, the true dynamic of living. All other motives and desires are its offspring and servants. The span of bodily life and the development of the psychic life are adjusted to it and determined by it. When it has potentially fulfilled its function, the body commences to die and the spirit to take on new qualities. The emotional life is dominated by it. Love rests in it. The place where the affections have their play is here, man and maiden, husband

and wife, parent and child, those experiences that satisfy or distract, make or mar the soul. Then to pass on to an impoverished life in a sphere where "there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but in all things as the angels in heaven"!

The usual conception of life beyond the grave is a strange mixture of inconsistencies. It figures existences which are disembodied, but at the same time exercising the faculties of living men. They think, they speak, they love, they enjoy and suffer, they sing or moan, all by hypothesis without the organs essential. They roam in sweet fields, feed on ambrosia and listen to celestial harmonies. These futile fancies need not be examined too coldly. If they are but phantoms they are creations of love.

It is of interest here to note that the hopes and imaginations of old age differ from those in young and vigorous life. For these, hope of future life is strong because their present sense of living is vigorous. Their memory of those they have lost is fresh. Their love follows them all the more ardently from the stimulus of their late bereavement. There has not been time for the love to fade. A reunion would be an ecstatic experience. But the passing of the years changes this. He himself grows, develops, changes. His love for his dead becomes a memory rather than an emotion, and he is no longer the same person whom they loved while here. My father died sixty years ago. I loved him dearly as he did me. But my life since has been built up in conditions and of elements of which he could have no conception. With what he was then and what I am to-day there could hardly be a thought in common. The dear, simple girl I loved and lost threescore years ago, what companionship could we have now? How could she but marvel that she could ever have loved such a man! Not that I have become unworthy, but I have become someone else. Thus the imagination throws itself forward into the new life without thought of the necessary conditions and circumstances. Besides that, it has so persistently occupied and entangled itself with ideas of bliss or misery, reward and penalty that the real question, to be or not to be, is forgotten. These imaginings neither allure nor daunt me. But is continued existence under the inevitable conditions desirable? I am not sure. But under any circumstances is it possible?

*"Death for the body with life is combined,*
*Darkness disputes with the light for the mind,*
*While spirit climbs upward, if good it desires,*
*Or, chained to the earth by its sin, it expires.*
*God is our Life, and our Light, and Upraising:*
*Whom God doth uplift shall never cease praising."*

FELIX MELANCTHON

# CHAPTER II

Says the Dean of St. Paul's: "The hope of immortality burns very dimply among us. Those who study the utterances of our religious guides must admit that it is so. The topic is mainly reserved for letters of condolence and is then handled gingerly."

This is true: it is true in my own experience. Once the immortality of the soul and belief in future life raised no question in my mind. It was a postulate. Now instead of it being an elemental conviction I am seeking for it as a possibility. Thoughtful people to-day are doubtful. Probably they face their last sleep with as much equanimity as did their fathers, but they are not sure of awaking. There must be some reason for this. In a general way the explanation is plain; it is due to the advance of science, to the spreading of its influence. Within Christendom the belief in human immortality was bound up with a theological system whose conception of human nature has become incredible.

It has been generally taken for granted that "Man" occupies a unique and solitary place at the head of the ranks of living creatures with an impassable chasm between him and them. For the naturalist this is satisfactory. But for the psychologist it is wholly misleading. Psychic phenomena disregard it entirely. The classification is determined by physical data solely. The problem of the future life has been hopelessly obscured by the traditional presumption that all those living creatures classed as Man on physical grounds are also Man on psychical grounds. This being assumed, the question of a future life becomes one concerning a race instead of one concerning individuals. This explains why all arguments for immortality have been so unconvincing. They have tried to prove too much. All those considerations which would establish immortality for all men as such are equally valid for many of the lower animals. I again emphasize the fact that the classification of Man as a separate order is made solely on zoölogical grounds. It serves for the zoölogist but is utterly confusing for the psychologist. The broad lines of demarkation which mark off species from species as to physical structure and function do not at all coincide with the path by which mental evolution has climbed. The point at which we may look for the emergence of immortality will be found, not at that which separates man from brute, but at that which separates one kind of man from the rest.

The story is told of a distinguished Frenchman who, to the long argument of a friend against the possibility of a future life, replied: "You say you are not immortal? Probably you are not; but I am." This is much more than a happy retort. It is essentially the solution of a problem otherwise insoluble. Whatever may be the difficulty of drawing such a line through and among men I do not argue now. It is sufficient to point out for the present that it is far less difficult to draw the line this way than any other way. It is hardly at all realized how nearly the lowest man and the highest animal approximate each other on the physical side, to say nothing of the far more important fact that their psychical qualities overlap. There are races of men now living, for instance, whose powers of language seem still in the transitional stage between inarticulate and articulate. The race from which we spring has had a long life, tens of thousands, more likely hundreds of thousands of years. During by far the greater portion of this long period he was psychically little more than the brute. There is nothing whatever to indicate that he possessed a moral sense differing greatly in degree or differing at all in kind from that of his infra-human ancestors. He did not know good from evil and was naked without being ashamed. Moreover, he still exists at the same low stage of development. There is no need to search for a "missing link." The connection of the orders of ascending life is not well represented by the simile of a chain and links. It is rather a line bearing upward with an immensely eccentric curve. If that curve can be measured in any considerable segment of its course its equation can be calculated. We but faintly realize how low in the scale of being the lowest man is, or how high the highest. Types of humanity so low that their very existence was unbelievable have lurked in the remote places of the earth unsuspected. The stories of the past about them were dismissed as "travelers' tales." It is a curious coincidence that, just as Darwin's book *The Descent of Man* was issued, Du Chaillu returned from tropical Africa with his story of the Pygmies. The story seemed so monstrous and incredible that the old Frenchman spent his life stigmatized as a romancer. A later traveler describes them as "averaging about four feet in height—about the stature of an American boy of eight years of age, having large heads, huge ears, and very apelike faces. Their arms are long and lank, the chest flat and narrow, widening below to support a huge abdomen, the legs short and bandy, the walk a waddling motion, suggesting strongly that of the gibbon. They are also apelike in their incessant grimacing and twitching of the eyebrows, nodding and wagging of the head and remarkable agility.” Still another explorer describes one of them as “having small, cunning, monkeylike eyes, close and deeply set, protruding lips, prominent abdomen, narrow flat chest, sloping shoulders, long arms, feet strongly turned inward and very short lower legs. He was of a light chocolate color, with a thin fringe of whiskers. His body was covered with a thick fur like hair.” They wear no clothes whatever, build no houses, cannot count above three. The adults manifest no trace of affection for father, mother, brother or sister. Their language is undeveloped, consisting of clicks and inarticulate vocals. Two of them were brought to Italy some years ago where, in the course of several years, they learned to speak and read Italian and one of them showed some proficiency in music. Their intellectual development stopped, however, at about the point reached usually by an European child of ten years and could not be carried further.

Now, the naturalist will properly classify these creatures under *Homo Sapiens* on the basis of physical structure and function. But when mental and spiritual standards are applied, what are they? Are they “man” or not? The attempt has been made to account for them as local instances of degeneration from a higher type. This attempt breaks down, however, in face of the fact that they evidently belong to a numerous group extending geographically wellnigh round the earth. In any case this would not affect the question. As individuals, they are what they are, and their spiritual possibilities depend upon their grade of being. They need no explanation if the simple facts be faced. There is no difficulty in the case, except that which is caused by the pre-determination to draw a hard and fast line between man and animal, and to range every individual "man" on one side of that line and every individual animal on the other. If it be once admitted that for psychical purposes the line does not run in that place the perplexity vanishes. But if it be insisted, on the other hand, that either all men are by their constitution immortal or that none are, then it will in the long run prove more reasonable to deny it of all than to believe it of all. Beings are living to-day at every conceivable stage between the semi-human Akka, who has no religion, no developed moral sense, and the enlightened American or European Christian whose sense of moral personality is far stronger than his sense of physical existence. The pre-human and semi-human ancestry of man is as well established as any human belief can ever be. To say that "evolution is not proven" is mere trifling. Nothing is ever proven in the sense that demands. But it is so generally accepted by the intelligent world that it has ceased to be even defended. "Evolution has outgrown the rank of a theory, for it has won a place in natural law beside Newton's law of gravitation, and in one sense holds a still higher rank because evolution is the universal master, while gravitation is one among its many agents." Why it should be challenged and resisted is not easy to understand. And yet it is so by probably a numerical majority of Christian people—probably because it is imagined to run counter to beliefs which have been read into the Bible.

That ancient story of Genesis greatly needs to be rescued from its friends. Read it afresh and see how it corresponds to the facts as they are now known. What else is "Adam" but a man in whom spiritual faculty first rose to the capacity to know good and evil. That he was the first and only creature of his kind upon the earth the story in no wise intimates. The story is as true as it is wonderful. That generations of good people have misread it is not wonderful, but that they stubbornly continue to misread it is strange indeed. There have, no doubt, been innumerable Adams, both in the past and to-day. So long as there are individuals and races in human form, undeveloped, rude, ignorant, unmoral, naked without being ashamed, so long their path upward to true humanity can only be through the leadership of one here and there who has passed his fellows and caught at least a passing glimpse of the tree of life. When such a one has reached the stage of ethical knowledge and choice he must with more or less sadness leave the lower innocence of his native Eden. This is true whether his Eden be by the land of Havilah or in the South Sea or in the slums of a great city.

We must face the fact that for the requirements of soul not all members of *Homo Sapiens* are man. To determine in the case of any individual whether or not he has attained to the possession of a soul capable of continuance, can only be tested by the event. But it is no more and no less difficult than it is to determine at what point in his embryonic development he became human for the naturalist's classification. The germ cell of a man and of a mouse are absolutely indistinguishable. The human embryo runs through and recapitulates in a marvelous way the line of ascent from the lower orders of life through which the race has climbed. It has been generally assumed that he becomes possessed of a "soul" at some point between the fertilization of the ovum and the issue from the womb. But for this there is not nor never has been a scintilla of evidence. Indeed, at times it would seem that there is no true individual, human or otherwise. The germ plasm, like an unbroken thread, runs through the generations, and they successively appear like separate beads strung upon it. The marvelous insight into cell and germ life which the modern microscope has made possible shows the life history of the individual to be far more extended than was imagined. The germs themselves have antecedent history as strange and complex as that of the embryo. They also move, chose, select, repulse, show preferences and aversions, in a word appear to have personalities of their own as really as does the new-born babe. The biogeneses of the soul cannot be concluded between conception and birth. The man with the microscope, the psychologist, the experimenter in the laboratory have traced its course both backward and upward far enough to show that the narrow limit within which the soul's origin and destiny have been concluded can no longer confine it. It is already clear that the psychic life which we call soul in man and instinct in beast and affinity in the germ cell is the same thing; that it develops according to laws of its own; that it is from first to last interdependent upon an organized material body; that at certain stages in its upward movement it takes on new and strange forms and qualities which could not at all have been predicted at an earlier stage.

But, it seems to me, the thing of supreme significance is that the upward steps or stages of physical evolution do not at all coincide with the steps and stages of psychic evolution. Reason of a very high order, for instance, is found among the cœlentera, seems to lie dormant throughout the reptiles, and shows itself at unexpected places among the mammalia. Does reason in man take on any new quality in virtue of which every individual becomes immortal? The baffling riddle is this: Does the psychic life of any creature at any stage of evolution ever attain to such a high, stable and independent existence of its own that it will be able to subsist in spite of the disintegration of the material organism with which it is correlated? What are the conditions upon which such a survival must depend? Are these conditions satisfied in the psychic lives to be found in lower animals? Are the conditions present in the case of every individual of that race which we call man? Or is the possibility of personal immortality only reached at a point more or less advanced in the evolution of man himself? In fine, is man *immortal,* or is he only *immortable?*

Just what is it which to-day overweighs the hope of a future life? Is it not that we have found mind to be so much more closely bound up with matter than had been supposed? Spirit is found to be so imbedded and intertangled with matter that an independent existence for it has come to seem incredible. We do not realize how new this conception is. Any doctrine of resurrection and the immortality of the soul formulated as much as fifty years ago cannot be accepted by the intelligent man of to-day. Since men have known anything they have known that there is some connection between mind and body. The first savage who was knocked senseless by the blow of another savage's club must have learned by that rude experiment that a broken head interrupted or confused his thought. One of the most amazing things in the history of the race is the way in which the significance of this fact failed to be realized. It was assumed that soul and body were two separate and independent things, living together, but each with a life of its own. So the matter rested until less than a century ago. The soul was conceived to inhabit the body as a tenant inhabits a house held upon an uncertain lease. That the two should be interdependent was no more thought than that a house should determine the character of a tenant. The sum of belief was that when the house fell into decay or was broken by catastrophe, the tenant moved away. Alterations or confusion of the mind were accounted for by the operation of alien spirits. Possession, obsession, demoniac influences accounted for insanity, and the full and independent action of the mind accounted for sanity. It is true that certain emotions were believed to have their seats in certain organs; as, hatred in the liver, by the Greeks; as, love in the intestines, by the Hebrews; and affection in the heart, by the moderns. But as for the interplay and mutual dependency of soul and body the idea never occurred or remained unfruitful.

It is hardly more than a century since the nexus of mind and body began to be studied. When Hartly announced his theory that mental action was dependent upon definite functions of the brain, he met with almost universal incredulity. When Cabanis, half a century later, delivered his brutal dictum that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile" he shocked society, not because he said a thing grossly, but because he said it at all. The paper read by Gall before the French Academy in 1805 may be called the beginning of the science of physiological psychology. Now it has become every-day knowledge that the diverse faculties of the mind are bound up with certain specific areas of the brain. This is not only true of the inferior functions such as sense perceptions and physical memory, but of the supreme functions as well. Whatever may be said of the over-fanciful refinements of the anatomist in trying to locate too minutely the cerebral areas which are connected with specific psychic activities, the general fact is accepted. We do not now send our insane to be exorcised. We do not hold a sick man morally responsible for his mental and moral vagaries. But the implications of this admission are far-reaching.

They concern the nature and possible destiny of the soul.

The venerable Doctor Keen tells me this case among many others. A lad of sixteen, suffering from epilepsy, is brought to him. He is a partial imbecile, slavering, violent, obscene, untruthful, thievish, a foul travesty of humanity, a youthful Caliban. Certain physical symptoms point to pressure upon a certain spot of his brain. An unnoticed and forgotten scar confirms the diagnosis. The skull is trephined, the pressure is removed, and the epilepsy is cured. But this is the least part of it. His soul is cured! His obscenity, deceit, and dishonesty disappear. Not seven devils have been cast out of his spirit but a bit of bone has been lifted out of his brain. The result is the same. But the barest recognition of the fact compels a new conception of the soul. Nor has the matter stopped with the simple admission. Ten thousand experiments have built up the present conviction that every psychic activity, every emotion, every thought, every act of will or affection, is correlated with some specific action of the brain and nervous system. The soul has seemingly been convicted of false impersonation. Instead of being an independent entity, living in the body and dominating it, it seems to be but a convenient word to designate the complex sum total of the highest and finest activities of the human body. This is the last word that Science can speak on the subject; and so far as it goes it is true. Whatever we may find the soul to be over and beyond this it is as dependent upon matter for its functioning as matter is upon it for its organization. This interdependence of spirit and matter exists through every step in the range of living things. In the lowest forms the whole protoplasmic cellular mass is all matter and all life. Without organs or differentiated faculties any portion of it responds to any stimulus which may touch it. In higher stages the mind begins to be localized. Rudimentary sense organs begin to appear, little protoplasmic filaments and pigment spots become the forerunners of organs of perception. Finally the highest of all psychic phenomena connects with certain specific spots of the brain and is reflected back in self-consciousness. There is no break or gap or interruption in the evolutionary process. Physical progress and psychical progress are tied together. They do not move in parallel lines or with an equal step, but are interrelated parts of our creeping, moving, climbing, life.

Now, this whole conception of body and soul is entirely modern. Plato, in his speculation, had no conception of it. Possibly Lucretius did, but not Paul nor Augustine nor Thomas Aquinas nor Calvin nor Jonathan Edwards. The actual amount of knowledge concerning the laws of life and death of force and energy and their permutations is greater by an immeasurable increment than that of all preceding ages. Plato reasoned that each soul is essentially immortal, being of God, and therefore not dependent upon any passing association with matter. This has been accepted by the Western world through twenty-four centuries. Pythagoras maintained that each man's soul came to him from the body of some other man or inferior animal, which it had just left and that leaving him it transmigrates to another still, wandering through eternity as the guest of unnumbered successive bodies. This belief, modified in various ways, has been in the past and is now entertained by probably a majority of earth's inhabitants. The belief current within Christendom and Islam has remained substantially unchanged for eighteen centuries. The Creed says, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." In its earlier form it says "the resurrection of the flesh." The phrase is capable of a wider and more reasonable connotation than the words would seem to imply. Such a meaning is usually read into it, but when the phrase was formulated it was intended to mean literally what it says. This is the meaning it still has for the multitude. It means that, at the moment of death, the soul and the body separate; that the body slowly decays and disintegrates; that the soul goes temporarily to a place of its own where it endures in a state of doubtful consciousness for an indefinite period; that at the end of that period every body which has ever lived will be reconstituted, of the same matter, with member, joint and limb restored; that each soul will be reunited to its own body; then comes judgment, reward and doom.

To merely state this series of notions is enough to show their essential impossibility. When first formulated, their difficulties did appear but were evaded by arguments which then sufficed, but which one now passes with a smile. Iraneus, for example, recognizes the impossibility of recovering the atoms of the body from decay, but argues that the body, having once been nourished by the eucharistic body and blood of Christ, is transformed in quality and so kept distinguished through the ages from the matter with which its dust is mingled. Tertullian asks: "Shall the same flesh which has fallen into decay be so expected to recover that the lame, the blind, the palsied, and the leper, and the one-eyed shall come back again, although there shall be no pleasure in the old condition? Will it again be subject to its present wants as of meats and drinks? Shall it come from the devouring flames, and the waters of the sea, and the maws of beasts and the crops of birds and the stomach of fishes? Shall we having lungs float? Or suffer pains in the bowels, or having organs of shame feel shame?" In reply he contends that the human body, although formed from the earth, has, in virtue of having become human flesh, ceased to be earth and been transformed into a different substance essentially incorruptible. Origen escaped the difficulty by recurring to St. Paul's dictum that the body which perishes is but the seed from which a new body will spring, asserting that in the old body is some portion or organ which will develop as the seed of a plant does, when its integument decays. This notion of the function of the pineal gland, the bone *luz* or the *os sacrum* appears again and again. Hardly anything more than an antiquarian interest can be claimed by the discussions of Fathers or Schoolmen. They had no conception of the laws and properties of matter or of the nexus of soul and body, of the complex arrangements by which matter becomes the basis of life.

The common man of to-day cannot say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body" unless he either uses it as a sacrosanct form of words conveying no intelligible meaning, or else as meaning something quite different from what the words connote. The knowledge which the world now possesses concerning the constitution of matter, of chemistry, biology and psychology have rendered it impossible to believe in any future life which should be dependent upon any reintegration of the body once returned to dust. Dust it is, to dust it doth return, and the return is final. If a material basis for a future life be demanded—as it must be—the requisite body must be sought for elsewhere and by other means. No doubt the current speech of man about it will remain long unchanged. In the realm of religion phrases which are at first to state truth scientifically become sanctified by use and hallowed by association. Slowly they lose the sharpness of connotation which they at first possess and become symbols standing for the complex emotions which are aroused by their sound, or for truths which are eternal, but for which no final or adequate phrase can ever be found. *Resurgam* will still be chiseled on tombs, the "hope of a joyful resurrection" will still cheer and solace the simple man's dying, the bodies of the dead will still be laid in the earth reverently because the thought of the personality who has left one's sight is bound up with the "muddy vesture of decay" which he wore while known and loved. The current conception is so naïve and simple, so easily presented to the imagination that it is very difficult to disengage it. Many a one who has long ago dismissed it as impossible still believes it when off his guard. But as far as the body is concerned, at any rate, it has come into being through the agency of secondary causes wellnigh infinite.

It is the last term in a course of evolution which reaches backward in time and downward in scale to the lowliest cell of primordial life, if not beyond.

Professor Osborn suggests that it originates in the energies of inorganic matter. The life of the body and the life of the spirit seem to have made their long journey together. The relation is so intimate that every thought, sensation, emotion, is connected with some specific molecular movement of the cerebral or nervous system.

Against this material reality, my hope of immortality falters. I am so imbedded in the material universe that my ultimate fate seems bound up with it. "Who shall deliver me from this body of death!" I cannot conceive of existence as a "disembodied spirit." The attempt baffles thought. A spirit without a body, without organs of expression, is as unthinkable as is a body acting automatically after being dead. It is idle to assert that there is no conflict between theology and material science. The contest is literally a life and death one. It has made it increasingly difficult to believe that the soul has an independent existence and that this existence can survive after the cessation of bodily functions. Those who feel this difficulty most keenly are those who most ardently wish for immortality. The "instinct of living" is strong in them. But this wish is overladen by their knowledge. Thus far it has not affected their lives. They love righteousness and hate iniquity whether or not it may affect their final destiny. They are possibly all the more strenuous in their obedience to duty, because they fear they might be less so without any ulterior peril. They do not desire to either live or die like the beasts, but they fear they must. They lay their dead away, out of sight, with a regret so keen and final that they will not speak of it. Their loves are all the more engrossing because they cannot see any possibility of the dear companionship being renewed after the present conditions have broken up. They have no quarrel with the simple faith of him who looks confidently for a resurrection of the decaying bodily forms. They rather envy him. Indeed, one of the deadliest temptations of the soul is that which solicits one to push away all his knowledge by a violent act of the will, so that he may believe the thing for which he so ardently longs. The most potent and elemental instinct, the love of life, is here opposed to the highest and best established knowledge. For the hope of immortality is but the instinct of self-protection carried to its *nth* term. The dread of ceasing to be is common to all sentient beings from the lowest to the highest. But, also, experience has painfully shown that the wish to live is impotent to keep one alive.

Not a few noble souls have sought relief from this distress out of one of those broad facts which modern study has brought out so vividly. It is easy to see that no individual atom of life or matter is altogether wasted in cosmic economy. When its individual life ceases, it at least enriches the soil. It contributes its mite toward better things to come after. Nature, the mighty master builder, wastes nothing. Each lower order of life is the scaffold upon which a higher is reared. Each overthrown individual can at least become a grain in the mortar which cements the whole together. Myriads must perish in order that one may live and advance. Should not this thought suffice for any life, some ask? The aspiration need seek no finer expression than that in which George Eliot clothed it:

> O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence
> To make undying music in the world;
> Breathing as beauteous order that control
> With growing sway the life of man.
> This is life to come
> Which martyred men have made more glorious
> For us who strove to follow: May I reach
> That purest Heaven: be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony.
> So shall I join the choir invisible
> Whose music is the gladness of the world.

None could wish to question or cheapen this high thought. But it is more than doubtful whether it can be anything but the thought of a great soul trying to make the best of a broken hope. The atmosphere of melancholy which envelops its very phrases is significant. The simple fact is that there is nothing in our experience which gives a sufficient expectation of good in humanity yet to be, to make up to one for the defeat of his own personal existence. Could we but know that our present lives are working together toward some good end, it would be of less consequence whether we were individually to endure. Says John Fiske: "To the dog under the knife of the experimenter, the world is a world of pure evil; yet could the poor beast but understand the alleviation of human suffering to which he is contributing, he would be forced to own that this is not quite true, and if he were also a heroic or Christian dog the thought would perhaps take away from death its sting." *Perhaps.* But to gain this solace the poor dog would have first to be convinced that the future man, to be benefited, would be intrinsically more valuable than a dog, and also that beyond the supposed man there is some good goal to be reached whose achievement would make worth while all that went before. But, just this, is what is not evident.

Are God and Nature then at strife,
  That Nature lends such evil dreams?
  So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That, I considering everywhere
  Her secret meaning in her deeds,
  And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear.

. . . . .

So careful of the type? but no
  From scarped cliff and quarried stone
  She cries, A thousand Types are gone,
I care for nothing, all shall go.

No: no *succedaneum* will suffice. I wish to live, I, in my own proper person, with memory, self-consciousness, will, and the love which is a part of myself. No projection of myself into the future as an influence will satisfy the craving. But how can this be if that nexus of sensation, thought, and will which I call "I" is dependent upon the interaction of molecules in organized matter?

*"One Almighty is from where*
*All things proceed, and up to Him return,*
*If not depraved from good; created all*
*Such to perfection; one first matter all*
*Endued with various forms, various degrees*
*Of substance, and in things that live, of life,*
*But more refined, more spirituous and pure,*
*As nearer to Him placed, or nearer tending,*
*Each in their several active spheres assigned,*
*Till body up to spirit works, in bounds*
*Proportioned to each kind."*

MILTON

## CHAPTER III

More than sixty years ago Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Huxley's *Place of Man in Nature* fell into my hands. I cannot say that they revealed a new world to me, but they destroyed the traditional conceptions of man and the universe which I had inherited. I became convinced of the truth of the theory or law of Evolution. Not at once. Like all revolutionary truths this one had to sink down in the mind through the superficial strata of present beliefs. The process is always a painful one. But as always truth prevails, not by strife but by insensibly giving color to the whole content of the mind. This process cannot be hurried, but is irresistible. I resisted, as did the great majority. During the time when the "Warfare of Religion and Science" raged, I became a not undistinguished champion of the traditional conceptions. But before long I found myself living in thought in a changed universe. The avowal of my convictions obliged me to part company with the religious circles in which I had spent my life. It compelled a new conception of the nature of man. Their naïve belief in Adam, the six days of creation, the amazing origin of woman, the fall of man, the resurrection of the flesh was interwoven with their lives. At the thought of its loss they shrank as though stripped of their clothes, and turned upon the Evolutionist as a vandal, a desecrator of shrines, a robber of children. So I was driven into the theological wilderness. Half a century has passed and I now find myself in company with practically the whole of the thinking world and with the intelligent part of the religious world, one of the few survivors of that dreary time.

The first effect was to expand enormously my ideas of time and space. Preëvolutionary thought lived and moved and had its being in a small and constricted universe. It was in the common mind confined to the earth with the sun and moon circling around it and the stars set as golden patens in the ceiling. Later on it was enlarged to the solar system. In time its ideas were confined within the scope of six or seven thousand years. Within this scant compass of space and time, man stood as the purpose and crown of creation. All being was subservient to him. It was easy thus to conceive of man as intrinsically immortal! But all that is changed. The conception of time and space has been infinitely expanded. Astronomy widened space and geology time. Now new systems, new galaxies reach to and through the nebulous abysses to orbs so distant as to be measured by millions of light years, and beyond them infinity. No one is surprised now when the geologist talks of earth's aspect a million or a thousand million years ago. Into this new conception of space and time came the doctrine of Evolution. It could not make its way before. As the early teachings of geology were frustrated against the narrow boundaries of accepted duration, so Evolution was hedged in and tied by the same straitness. Now, however, the anthropologist has room to work. What place in nature does he find for Man? How shall he define him? How came he to be what he is? Is his path of evolution complete or is something new before him?

But even yet it is little realized how profoundly the evolutionary thought must affect the conception of a future life. No doctrine of the life of the world to come or the resurrection of the dead formulated even fifty years ago can be satisfying to the man of to-day. During that period there has been an accumulation of knowledge concerning the nature of matter, the beginnings and development of life, the laws of energy and force and of their protean transmutations immeasurably greater than that attained in all preceding time.

Due to that strange illogicalness of human nature it is possible for multitudes to accept and hold all this new knowledge and at the same time to hold on to notions about life and death and immortality and the nature of man which are quite incompatible therewith. But I cannot conceive how they can do so when they come face to face with the great mystery, as I do through the passing of the years. And I know that I am not alone. The new biology, physics and anthropology have overclouded the common hope of life in the world to come. The simple dualism of soul and body upon which that has heretofore been based is no longer believable by multitudes. The phenomenon of a human personality can no longer be accounted for by the assumption of a temporary union of an immortal soul with a perishable body. The nexus has been seen to be not arbitrary, artificial, mechanical, but organic. This conviction which cannot be resisted has overweighed and sunk in many their belief in the life everlasting. To not a few, this has been a burden more heavy than would be a judge's doom to physical death. They see that what they call the soul and what they call the body are so identified in their whole career from the germ cell to the grave that they can no longer think of the psychic personality surviving the breakup of the physical organism. When they try to do so they find the same intellectual helplessness that they would if bidden to think of shadow without substance or extension without space. For them not only has the hope of immortality faded, but the very existence of such a present fact as the soul has become difficult to believe. It is true that men of distinction in the physical sciences still accept the conventional orthodoxy. But they do so only by keeping their scientific beliefs and their religious beliefs in separate compartments where they never touch. The conflict of religion and science is a real one. It can only be evaded by giving vague, formless definitions to the one and the other. So correlated are psychic and physical energy that the soul of man threatens to disappear as an independent entity.

At this point, a serious attempt has been made to find relief by drawing a line through psychic phenomena and labeling those nearest the physical basis "instinct" and those higher up "reason." This latter, it is contended, together with the "conscience" or ethical faculty, constitute the soul proper, and are peculiar to man. Grant, it is said, all that biology can claim concerning the phenomena of life, still man is marked off by the possession of psychic qualities so different in kind from those of the lower creatures that he stands unique in the possession of an immortal soul. This has proven, however, but a frail dike set against an incoming tide. So long as psychologists confined the researches to the human mind the contention was tenable. But it has broken down before the weight of actual experience and observation. So long ago as 1760 Remairus published his *General Observations on the Instincts of Animals.* In it he called in question the validity of the distinction between "instinct" and "reason." The time, however, was not ripe and his observations attracted little notice. But within the last fifty years naturalists and psychologists have conducted experiments so abundant and so careful that the former classification of psychic phenomena into reason and instinct has been definitely abandoned. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that psychic actions may be thus distinguished, but that reason is not the peculiar endowment of man nor instinct of beasts. For example, among Indians and other savages, the sense of direction is, so far as one can see, just as much an instinct as it is in the homing pigeon. The faculty seems to be of the same kind and not differing greatly in degree. The wild man will turn his face unerringly toward his lodge, and with only a subordinate regard to the sun and the lay of the land keep his course through forest and swamp, mountain and desert until he reaches his goal. Nor is this the only "instinct" of man. The new-born babe knows how to suck. The young mother knows how to hold the babe in her arms. But the significant fact for us is that those higher faculties of the soul, such as reason, choice, shame, and duty, also show themselves in creatures far below man in the scale of being. I do not stop to note the strange wisdom of the ant and the bee whose Liliputian commonwealths might serve as models for human cities. The "reason" which they display shows such striking limitations and peculiarities that it may be set aside, if one chooses, as purely reflex or automatic. A characteristic of reason is to discern an object desired, and to use rational and suitable means to attain it. A very few instances chosen from the mass of observation and experiment recorded will suffice to show this. The following experiment, made by myself, will serve.

Years ago on a hunting trip, I was in camp with a friend in the far Northwest. A mile above our camp was a beaver dam. We visited or passed it every day and saw the marks of the beavers' nocturnal woodcraft. One day, to see what the inhabitants of the aquatic village would do, we broke a two-foot-wide gap in the dam which backed the water up around their submerged houses. Next day the gap was mended. In the night the beavers had gone ashore and cut down a tree six inches thick, which stood more than a hundred feet away from the stream. The trunk of the tree was of no use for their purpose. They felled it to procure the small limbs which grew twenty feet from the ground. The chips showed that they had cut these limbs, *in situ,* the proper length to mend the hole in their dam, thirty yards away. Each stick was just long enough to reach across the break and allow enough lap over at each end. These they had put in place and interlaced with smaller twigs and tamped with leaves and earth, so that the dam was good as new. Now, note what they had done. First they cut down a tree to secure the limbs which were in sight but out of reach. Then they ascertained the proper length for the pieces they wished. Then they cut them where they lay and carried them to where they were needed. The ultimate purpose was to save the doors of their house from being exposed by lowering the water. In what way does this differ in *kind* from the reason of a man who plans to build a house?

Faculties still higher surprise us by showing themselves far lower in the scale of being than we looked for them. Here is the story of a naturalist of highest standing: "A troop of baboons was crossing a valley in Abyssinia. Some had already ascended the opposite mountain and some were still in the valley when the latter were attacked by dogs, but the old males immediately hurried down from the rocks, with mouths open, roaring so fearfully that the dogs quickly drew back. They were again encouraged to the attack, but by this time all the baboons had reascended the heights except a young one of about six months, who was loudly calling for help, climbed a block of rock and was surrounded. Thereupon one of the largest males came down again from the mountain, slowly went to the young one, coaxed him down, and carried him away, the dogs being too much astonished to make an attack." In what does the action of the baboon differ in kind from that supreme moral sense which moves its possessor to imperil his life for his brother?

Here is from James Forbes in his *Oriental Memoirs:* "One of the females had been killed and the body carried to our tent. Forty or fifty of the tribe soon gathered around the tent, chattering furiously and threatening an attack, from which they were only diverted by the display of the guns whose effect they perfectly understood. But while the others retreated the leader stood his ground continuing his threatening chatter. Finding this of no avail, he came to the door of the tent alone, moaning sadly and by his gestures seemed to beg for the dead body. When it was given him he took it up and carried it away to his companions." Is this a story of Apes or of Men?

Such facts might be quoted to fill volumes from that mass of literature upon the subject which has been accumulated by careful observers. One, however, is as good as a thousand. The effect of them all has been to establish the truth of the generalization made by Darwin seventy years ago: "The difference in mind between man and the lower animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind. The senses and instincts, the various emotions and faculties of which man boast may be found in an incipient or even sometimes in a well-developed condition in the lower animals."

Reason, memory, sympathy, and love manifest themselves far below man. The simple fact is that in the attempt to trace the origin, development and destiny of the soul the naturalist's classification of "man" and "animal" must be disregarded. In advance one dare not say where the line between mortal and immortal creatures will be found. It may conceivably coincide with that which marks off *Genus Homo: Class Mammalia Order Primates,* or it may be found to run much below that, so as to include many of man's humble kinsmen. Or again it may be found necessary to settle upon a line running irregularly through and among the ranks of men. The soul has its own laws and announces its own requirements. It may turn out that not all whom we call men are Man for the purposes of the soul. For natural science it is true that "God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the earth." They breed together and that settles their physical relationship. But there are psychic relations between man and animal even more intimate and real than the physical connection of man with man. Measured by psychic standards the interval between the lowest man and the highest man is a hundredfold greater than that between the lowest man and the highest brute. It may be humiliating but it is true, nevertheless, that we are far more closely related to the animals on the spiritual side than on the physical, close as that is. A comparative anatomist would distinguish at once between the bone of a dog and the bone of a man. But let a certain action involving thought be described to him and he would be quite unable to say whether the actors were men or beasts.

Now, seeing that "I," as a man, am imbedded in the order of living beings, bound up with matter as to my body, kin to the lower animals as to my spirit, what avenue of escape is open to me from this existence to another?

The common belief that "man is immortal" rests upon the assumption that "man" is a term with a fixed, definite, universal meaning. By the evolutionist—and we are all evolutionists—this assumption demands examination. Do all men stand on the same level by nature? Was the human race essentially immortal from the beginning? If not, at what point in the evolutionary process did he become so? Is immortality an inherent quality or is it only one possible of attainment? I should not have been surprised, but I was, when I saw that this latter is the obvious and unmistakable contention of the Christian Scriptures. Later on I must set this out at length. Just now I want to see whether it agrees with the known facts of biology and anthropology, in other words with the facts of life.

I know of no better epitome of human and prehuman history than Professor Fairfield Osborn's *Men of the Old Stone Age*. The field of human knowledge has grown so extensive that the best the every-day man can do is to be guided by one who is accepted as an expert by those who know. Osborn is such a one. I therefore take at his hands gratefully the information I need to solve the problem which immediately concerns me, viz., what is my origin? I want to know this because I am sure that origin and destiny are correlated.

It is necessary to expand this epitome at length, in order to feel its force. At what stage of evolution, if at any, does "man" become capable of immortality? "The partly known ancestors of the anthropoid apes and the unknown ancestors of man probably originated among the forests and flood plains of Southern Asia, and early began to migrate westward into northern Africa and western Europe."

How far back can this ancestry be traced? And what like were the earliest known? Remains of anthropoid forms of life are found as early as Oligocene times, a million or more years ago. The length of time is not much more than an intelligent guess, nor does it much matter. It is inconceivably long. During those æons, in the midst of secular changes of earth's surface, shiftings of land and sea, rising and settling of continents, successions of arctic and tropical climates, the creature we call Man slowly emerged. His ancestry can be traced backward to the point where it intersects the line of the anthropoid apes. Beyond that, the record is beyond recovery. The presence of human intelligence showed itself first in flints and shards and rudely shaped stones. But presently there came to light the skeletal remains of semi-human forms, mingled with the fossil remains of long extinct plants and animals. Many of these have now been laid bare. When arranged according to their sequence in geologic time they show a regular advance in form from anthropoid to man. Not a "missing link" but a whole chain of them are available for study. Very little of any single specimen is required. The laws which govern the relation of part to part, limb to limb, member to member are so fixed that the comparative anatomist can rebuild *ex pede herculem* with entire certitude. A bone, a tooth, a fragment of a skull only are needed from which to reconstruct their owners. These "links" lie far apart with thousands of centuries between them. Their discovery is almost always accidental, but accident may be expected to fill in gaps as time goes on. There are enough now, however, to set the general fact beyond question.

The earliest specimen, so far, was found in the island of Java, two teeth, a thigh bone and part of a skull. They were mingled with the fossil bones of extinct elephants, rhinocerous, and other forms of Pleistocene time. What sort of a creature was this when alive a million or more years ago? It was about five feet seven inches high. The shape of the thigh bone proves that it did not walk upright, though more nearly upright than does the highest anthropoid ape. The teeth are more nearly human but still far from human. Comparative anatomists agree in calling it *Pithecanthropos,* "Ape Man," and assigning it a place between Anthropoid and Man. In brain capacity it is thirty-four; the next higher pre-human form is forty; the lowest existent human race is fifty-four. Its semi-erect attitude is of the first significance. It shows that the arms and hands were comparatively free from the labor of locomotion. This, if not the first, is a necessary step in human evolution. The high, bony ridge of the brow, the prognathous jaw, the powerful jaw, the capacity of the skull show a strong, brutal, but intelligent creature. What was it?

Next in order comes a lower jaw discovered in 1891 near the mouth of the Necker in Germany, under six hundred feet of sand deposited during the ages by the river. "Lying beside it were the remains of the ancient elephant, the rhinocerous, the aurochs, the cave bear and the extinct horse. The jaw shows a combination of features never before found in any fossil or in recent man. The protrusion of the lower jaw, which gives shape to the human chin, is entirely lacking. Had the teeth been absent it would have been impossible to diagnose it as human. It might well have been classed as some gorilla like anthropoid. The absolute certainty that these remains are human is based on the form of the teeth; all essentially human, though somewhat primitive in form, they show no trace of being intermediate between man and the anthropoid apes, but rather of being derived from some older common ancestor. . . . We observe that the powerful bony branches of the jaw close in upon the space left for the tongue to such an extent as to interfere seriously with the free use of the tongue in articulate speech." Its owner has been named by naturalists *Palœanthropos, Heidelburgensis.* Was it man? Was it immortal?

In 1911 were unearthed on the ancient wealdon strata at Piltdown, Sussex, England, fragments of a representative of a creature still farther advanced. The fragments consisted of pieces of a skull, half of a jaw, a tooth, a pair of nasal bones. The bed in which they lay contained also fossils of mastodon, mammoth, primitive elephant, rhinocerous, and hippotamus. It also contained very rough and primitive flint implements.

"The several bones of the brain-case, typically human, are not in the least like those of the anthropoid apes: the brain capacity not equalling that of some of the lowest in existing native Australian races. The jaw presents profoundly different characters. The whole of the bone, preserved closely, resembles that of a young chimpanzee. Thus the slope of the bony chin is between that of an adult ape and of the Heidelburg man. . . . The teeth are relatively longer and narrower than those in the modern human jaw. . . . The face was elongate or prognathous, and the canine teeth very prominent, like those of the anthropoid apes. In shape and capacity the brain-case is midway between that of a chimpanzee and a modern man. The creature has been named Eoanthropos." It was associated with the fossil remains of the saber-toothed tiger, the mammoth, the lion, and the wild ox.

These pre-human or semi-human beings are isolated fragments of extinct races, *Pithecanthropos,* *Homo Heidelburgensis, Eoanthropos.* They show no direct line of descent, the later from the earlier. But they do exist in a direct ascending series in the order of time. The farther back in time they existed, millions and millions of years, the more primitive and less human they are found to be. As the æons rolled on they gradually approached to humanity. *At what stage in this long process did the being become endowed with immortality?*

Human history proper begins with a race which developed fifty thousand years ago in caves and grottoes among the Danube and Rhine and through Southern Europe generally. The first discovery of these remains was at Gibralter, in 1848. Since then their skeletons have been uncovered and their life traced all over Europe throughout the fourth Glacial period. They lived in caves and rocky shelters. Their climate was moist and varied from very cold to very warm. Whether they knew of fire or not is uncertain. Among contemporary animals were the horse, the bison, woolly rhinocerous, the cave bear, the saber-toothed tiger, the reindeer. Hundreds of their skeletons and handiworks have been uncovered. They lived through a period of twenty-five to fifty thousand years and then became completely extinct. In stature they were from four feet, ten inches to five feet, five inches. They were only semi-erect, their skeletal structure making perfectly erect posture impossible. Professor Osborn describes their physical structure as follows:

"The distinctive features of this group are *first:* features found in the different existing races of man but never in the anthropoid apes and therefore human; *second:* features, all of which have never been found combined in any distinct race of recent man, representing therefore a distinct species of man; *third:* features outside of the limits of varieties in the recent races of men, and intermediate between them and the variation limits of the anthropoid apes. The peculiar features of the race are the heavy overhanging brows and retreating forehead, the large size of the nasal opening which indicates a broad, flattened nose. The long space between the nasal opening and the line for the insertion of the incisor teeth, indicates a very long upper lip. The median section of the skull of the chimpanzee, of the Neanderthal man and of the native Australian displays in a striking manner that the Neanderthal skull is truly an intermediate or half-way form between the anthropoid apes and that of *Homo Sapiens.* It must be noted that many of these features may be found in the recent skulls of inferior races, but they are very rare, very scattered, very isolated and occur only as abortions. It is the accumulation of all these features in every skull of a whole series, which constitutes an assemblage of entirely new and great importance. In volume of cerebral matter the brain of the Neanderthal man is surely human, but in form it lacks the proportion characteristic of the superior organization of the brain in recent man. In its general form the brain is more like that of the anthropoid apes in the relatively small size of the frontal portion. The left frontal lobe, in particular, which is associated with the power of speech is not much developed, so that a limited development of the faculty of speech is inferred. The Neanderthal head is very large in proportion to the short thick-set body, which rarely exceeds five feet, five inches. In proportion to the length of the thigh the lower leg is much shorter than in any existing human race. With respect to the opposition power of the thumb against the fingers, a distinctive human characteristic, the Neanderthal development is decidedly lower than that of existing races. The total aspect of Neanderthal man may be characterized in the following manner; an enormous head placed upon a short, thick trunk, with limbs very short and thick-set and very robust; the shoulders broad and stooping, with the head and neck habitually bent forward; the arms relatively short as compared with the legs; the lower leg as compared with the upper leg, shorter than in any of the existing races of men; the knee habitually bent forward without the power of straightening the joint or of standing fully erect."

Such in physical structure and outward feature was the race which inhabited the caves and grottoes of Europe for thousands of years and then disappeared, leaving no recognizable descendants. That they had some degree of human intelligence, is shown by the shaped-stone implements found among their bones. They were able to capture and transport to their caves even the large contemporary animals. They were armed with wooden weapons and bone- and stone-headed darts and spears. There is no indication that they possessed the bow and arrow.

Says Osborn: "Whatever may have been their fate in other regions, certainly the most sudden racial changes which we know of in the whole prehistory of Europe is the disappearance of the Neanderthal race. From geologic evidence this is believed to be between twenty and one hundred thousand years before our era. So far as we know at present the Neanderthals were entirely eliminated. No trace of the survival of the pure Neanderthal type has been found."

Whether or not the Neanderthal man is one of the links in the ancestry of modern man or whether he was the final fruit on the top of a branch of the family tree which ended with him, are questions which at present there are not enough data to determine. Nor for the purpose of my quest does it greatly matter. He was human, but not human as the higher living races are. His psychic life was correlated with his physical structure. There is no indication that his race took any care of its dead or had any conception of future existence. Professor Osborn is of the opinion that he is in our line of ancestry. Hredlicka doubts it:

"It would probably be easy to harmonize all the rest of the differences between Neanderthal and later man with the idea of a simple evolution and transmission were it not for the obstacle of the Neanderthal man's skull and bones. They impress one by such marked differences from those of any later man that a bridging over of the separation has to many seemed impossible."

I have traced the development of the being we call man from the lowest semi-human anthropoid form to the man of to-day. Thus we see him at many stages. Once he is a squat, low-browed, long-armed prognathous animal, with only rudimentary organs of speech and constricted brain. Again he has advanced a little farther from the simian form, again a little farther, and farther again. The gains have been by infinitesimal advances. The time has been fifty millions of years at least and no man knows how much longer. Now, at what stage in that evolution did he attain to the capacity of immortality? And as he exists still at all stages of this development, except the very earliest, are all the individuals of the race alike, and at all stages, endowed with the quality of being immortal?

*"Speaking for myself, I can see no insuperable difficulty in the notion that at some period in the evolution of humanity this divine spark may have acquired sufficient concentration and steadiness to survive the wreck of material forms and endure forever. Such a crowning wonder seems to me no more than the fit climax to a creative work that has been ineffably beautiful and marvellous in all its myriad changes."*

JOHN FISKE

## CHAPTER IV

Just what is the "I" for which I expect or hope immortality? It is not my body: I have had enough of that. It is "myself." But what is that? Recall the old rhyme:

As I walked by myself I talked to myself
And thus myself did say to me.

"I", "myself", "me"! Maeterlink, in his works on the Bee and on the White Ant, approaches the answer. In the hive are thousands of individuals, but they are not really individuals, for none appears to have an independent consciousness of its own. Queen, drones, workers, soldiers, slaves, each goes about its own task, but all in obedience to a common will which although located nowhere, is always and instantly operative. He calls it the "Spirit of the Hive." So, as to my body; it is composed of sixty million million cells. Each one of the many cells has a life history and a life work of its own. Each kind is busy building and sustaining its own organ. One company industriously builds up bone, another muscle, all busy as bees or ants at their specific tasks. When danger threatens any part of the complex organism, message is sent and relief through the blood stream is hurried to the threatened spot, as in the hive. The various congeries of cells are maintained in harmonious relation with each other and with the whole by some authority which is located nowhere, but is operative everywhere. Away beneath my consciousness it issues its commands. What is that in my body which issues to the thousand communities of cells the essential orders on which they depend for their coördinated action? Is that not myself? It functions within, the master of the body; it faces without and embraces the universe. This is "I" who cling to being and hope for immortality! When the time comes when "myself" will no longer have living matter to deal with, will its occupation be gone? Must the outward vision cease with the inner function? That, as we shall see, depends upon the definition of matter.

So far as we can see, there is not only no living personality apart from a material organism, but a "disembodied spirit" is unthinkable. It is only a phrase to which no mental image responds. So far as human thought can go this is true even of the idea of God. We can form no conception of the "Absolute God." That is merely a symbolic expression. In reality I cannot think of God apart from thought of the universe. In the background of my thought is always the idea of the universe over against which God is. For the purpose of human thinking, matter is as eternal and ubiquitous as God is. This is not to say that it is so "absolutely." We know nothing about absolute being. But the practical reason cannot formulate the idea of God without the universe, or of a soul without a body. If any fancy he can do so, let him try the experiment.

A spirit with no material organs for expressing itself puts to confusion all our ideas as to what a human being is. The body is just as much a component part of our idea of a man as a soul is. It is as easy to think of the body becoming an immortal automaton without a soul as to think of the soul becoming immortal without a body. We instinctively revolt against either idea once it gets clearly before the imagination. There is no form of energy which does not manifest itself through matter. The soul cannot flit across the river alone. Nor is it any relief to imagine it existing in a quiescent state, waiting for the body. It cannot wait. An individual life must be continuous or not at all. It cannot stop and go on again. The fond Easter imagery of the egg and the butterfly will not bear examination. The caterpillar, the imago, and the butterfly are all included in a single cycle, to be sure, but the continuity of the individual is broken at each stage, and the cycle when completed returns upon itself.

It goes nowhere. Wherever a future life is conceived of at all it presumes a material existence: the Elysian fields, the happy hunting grounds of the savage, the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." It cannot be otherwise—Why not?

The earth teems with life. Living creatures populate the surface, creep and burrow beneath the soil. It is everywhere, in every drop of water, in every grain of dust, filling the still summer air with its multitudinous drone, roaring in the streets of every great city, crowding and choking in the forests of the tropics, swarming in the sea. It emerges silent and unseen from inorganic matter, and crowds every step of the long, strange, tortuous path upward to its supreme manifestation in human self-consciousness. When we begin to study and examine its forms, one by one, we are arrested by the significant fact that the ultimate goal of each individual is to pass on to some other the life which it possesses. If it can only reproduce, it is ready to die. Its organs of reproduction are the ones to which all other are ministrant. Its provision of locomotion and digestion are but means to this end. Countless millions in the lower orders of animal life exist only long enough to copulate, and give up their lives in the act. In the vegetable world this is the law without exception. Through stem and twig, through leaf and flower, it comes to seed. When it has done so much, it has served its purpose and falls into decay. Then comes into play the inexhaustible ingenuity of devices to begin again the cycle from the seeds. They are not left to chance, or rather the laws of chance are compelled to serve the purposes of life. There are hooks on the seeds to catch on the fleeces of moving animals; there are wings or balloons to float them on the wind; there is toothsome pulp to entice the bird to swallow the indigestible kernel and drop it in suitable soil; there are a thousand devices, all to the same purpose, which is to guarantee the transmission of life. To the same end the instincts and appetites are subsidized. The "imperious instinct of propagation" dominates all desires, is stronger than pain or even the fear of death. In all, except the higher animal forms, it is not even left to choice. Reproduce they must, even if it does cost life. In the whole organic world every other consideration is subordinated to the single purpose of keeping the stream of life flowing. Even the most complex human society is organized about this supreme necessity. This determination is so inexorable that, lest it might be defeated, a hundred thousand individuals are brought into life only to perish, in order to make sure that from among them all one may reproduce. Even in man the provision for reproduction determines the whole plan of his being. His natural term of life is adjusted to the length of time required to reach puberty. When his power to reproduce declines, he begins to die. His intellectual powers are correlated with this movement. His social habits are ultimately fixed with reference to this need. "Be fruitful and multiply" is the primordial command stamped upon the very constitution of animate nature.

But once this truth has gained our assent, it leads us to confront the supreme difficulty. Life seems to be everything, and the individual nothing. If only the species can win its way forward and upward, the unit seems to be of no value. We appear to be caught in the current of a mighty moving stream of life which will assimilate our juices and sink us in the slime or fling us dead upon the shore without ruth even as without anger. The life is everything; the organism in which the life is for the moment conserved seems to be nothing. Now, if an individual immortality is to become possible, nothing less is necessary than a reversal of this elementary cycle. It is clear that that can only be reached if an individual be found who is intrinsically stronger than his species. Up to this point life sweeps around everlastingly in a closed circle, from seed through plant or animal to seed again and so about continually. If escape from it be ever possible it must be at a tangent, and by some kind of individual whose life orbit sweeps far enough away from its material center to be caught in some mighty attraction from beyond. And, to continue the figure, the difference between the individual who passes on and the one who remains enchained within the circle of nature need only be infinitesimal, provided it occur at the right point. An illustration which may serve to make the matter plainer can be drawn from physical mathematics. Take the case of two bodies moving through space. One of them has for its path the extremest conic section, that is, a curve with the greatest possible eccentricity. The path of the other is a parabola. The difference between the two curves is literally infinitesimal. Yet moving in the one, the body must ultimately return to the point from whence it started. By the other it must move out into infinite space. May we not similarly expect that a change correspondingly slight in the psychic movement of an organism may produce a result equally important?

In the lowest order of life there are really no individuals at all. The amœba is simply a speck of protoplasmic jelly, uniform and slightly sensitive. It has no limbs, organs, or members. To multiply, it only breaks in two. Each part is as much or as little offspring as it is parent or as it is self. Each half, in turn, divides again and so the propagation goes on. It cannot be said that individuality belongs to any of its units, for each unit is divisible and it is the essence of personality to be indivisible. The thing that cannot be divided is the "individual." In the next higher stage of being a sort of compound or communistic individuality begins to show, as in sponges, among animals, and through the vegetable world. Each sponge or plant or tree is a group of partially independent units deriving their sustenance in common. Not until a comparatively high stage of evolution has been reached does the actual individual appear "whose life is in himself." Then he appears only to live his little life, beget a child if he can, and perish. The incalculable multitude of living forms merge as it were into a mighty river flowing through the æons and dropping over the precipice to death, more numerous than all the drops at Niagara. Nor does the spectacle cause moral distress or revolt until the individual atoms come to be of such consequence that we begin to rebel against the aimlessness of it all. No beast has been defrauded of any due because it has to die. Mere existence and sensation have been for it a positive boon, whether its life has been long or short. This is also true of the brutelike man, and, what is of more consequence, this is his own judgment in the case. He clings to life for its own sake, and the lower in the scale he is the more tenacious he is. Even Laertes can face the end with a light heart because he has had his life. Not till humanity reaches the stage of Hamlet does he begin to question whether to be or not to be. "Is life worth living?" is a question which cannot be asked until man has reached a very high sense of the value of the individual. At all earlier periods the reply is yes; or more likely the inquiry is quite unintelligible.

Considering the whole human race from its primeval brutality until now, it is probable that the overwhelming majority have no unliquidated claim upon existence. They have had the gift of living, and have made of it all that could be made by them. There is nothing more due. But there are many surely of which something more can be said. Their capacities are wider than their spheres. Their psychical life is stronger than their physical. Their affections are stronger than their appetites. Their spirits have established so many relations with other personalities, with nature as a whole, with ideals which are more real to their apprehension than is matter itself, with the Infinite Personality whom they feel enfolding themselves and nature in his arms, that to think of all this coming to naught, because the foundation of the material body is cut from under it by death, brings to our feelings a sense of distress and essential unreasonableness which is intolerable. Such a one has already learned the secret of going beyond himself by his sympathies. He is an individual, as the inorganic crystal is, as the organized germ cell is, as the brute is, as the animal is, but he is something more. In common with all these, he is under the law which subordinates the individual to the species and throws it away when it has fulfilled its use of reproduction. But he has, to some degree at any rate, and in some portion of his being, escaped from this law by having come into the possession of certain qualities which cannot be propagated by reproduction. He did not reach these qualities at the point where he became man by bodily structure, or by the possession of mind, but at an uncertain point high above that of primitive man. But whenever and however this new faculty is reached, we may fairly expect that it will in some way be preserved in being. This certitude does not come alone, or in the first place, from religious faith, but from watching Nature's ways. One thing the scientist knows right well; that is that Nature does not hesitate a moment to change or to reverse methods which she has used throughout long stretches of time whenever she has something to gain by such reversal. If it shall appear at any stage in the upward movement of being that more is gained by keeping the individual in a continued life than by breaking him up for sake of the species, we may by all analogy expect that Nature will find some way to do so. It would only be to repeat what has been done more than once before. The inexorable forces of gravitation and chemical affinity had their own way in the universe for an eternity, until they were arrested and turned about in the interest of life. Overproduction, death, and survival of the fittest had their ruthless sway until they were reversed in the interest of selection. The supremacy of the race at the expense of the individual we may expect to continue just until something in the individual comes to be of more importance than that law, and no longer.

I have tried to show that that something in a soul may become stable enough to survive the disintegration of the body. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life!"

Professor Osborn in his book on *The Origin and Evolution of Life* starts with energy. "Some kind of energy precedes some kind of form, rendering it probable that energy also precedes and controls the evolution of life. . . . The evolution of life may be rewritten in terms of invisible energy as it has long since been written in terms of visible form." He dismisses the old concept of "vital energy," though it is not easy to see why. Surely there are abundant phenomena which cannot be forced to come under any other form of energy known. But if energy through matter can produce life, as he contends, is it not conceivable that under proper conditions the energy of life may clothe itself in eternal matter? Whatever one may or may not think of the human soul it is surely a form of energy. Is there anything in the stuff of the cosmos which could serve it for a body after the present one has dropped away?

The most remarkable feat of modern Physics has been to penetrate some way into the mystery of the constitution of matter. Two and a half centuries ago the mind of Newton forecast this result in closing his *Principia,* with this prophetic paragraph:

"And now we might add something concerning a most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies; by the force and action of which spirit the particles of bodies mutually attract one another at near distances and cohere if contiguous; and electric bodies separate, and light is emitted, reflected and heats bodies; and all sensation is excited and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will, namely by vibrations of this spirit mutually propagated along the solid filaments of the nerves from the outward organs of sense to the brain, and from the brain to the muscles. But these things cannot be explained in a few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments which is necessary to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this elastic spirit operates."

The "sufficiency of experiments" which Newton lacked have been made by Crookes, Thompson, Roentgen, Bequerel, Lodge, Ramsay, Soddy, Rutherford and a hundred other mathematicians and physicists, with the result that they have exposed what Crookes calls "the fourth estate of matter." This amazing substance—call it the "ether" with Sir Oliver Lodge, or "the Electric Flux" with Pupin, it makes no difference—which fills all space, interpenetrates all matter, is the medium through which light, heat, electricity and radio emanations travel. It is material, but of a kind which no previous definition of matter fits.

Extension, ponderosity, dimension and such qualities do not apply to it. It occupies the same space at the same time with all material bodies. It has been weighed and measured, it is at the same time a tenuous fluid, a jelly and a solid. Physicists appear to have pursued matter to its utmost recesses. In its atoms, electrons and protons, says Sir William Crookes, "we have actually touched the borderland where matter and energy seem to merge into one another—the shadow realm between the known and the unknown. I venture to think that the greatest scientific problems of the future will find their solution in this borderland, and even beyond. Here, it seems to me, lie ultimate realities, subtle, far reaching, wonderful." All point to the probability that in the final analysis Matter and Spirit will be found to be allotropic forms of the same thing. By thus breaking up the accepted definition of matter the way has been opened to possibilities of the future life against which the physical sciences have no weapon. Moreover it brings it within their purview. The observed interdependence of body and soul which has so weighed down the hope of immortality may prove the rescue of that hope.

A generation ago two distinguished physicists, Professors Balfour and Tait, put forth hesitatingly a theory of a physical basis of a future life. Starting from the evident double truth that all psychical activity is associated with molecular activity in the matter of the brain and nerves, while at the same time physical and psychical phenomena are evidently different things, they suggest that there may well be a *tertium quid,* a third something, which serves as the nexus between them, and that this ethereal matter may be such a thing.

Each thought we think, each emotion we feel, is accompanied by certain molecular movements and rearrangements in the brain. The psychical activity actually builds up a physical fabric for itself. But the material fabric is every moment disintegrating and at death falls into ruin. Now, suppose that before that ruin befalls, the soul shall have been able to build up, as it were, a brain within the brain, a body within the body, something like that which the Orientals have for ages spoken of as the "astral body." Then, when the body of flesh shall crumble away, there would be left a body, material to be sure, but compacted of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our sense perceptions deal with. It is a material which, so far as science has anything to say, is essentially indestructible. It moves freely among and through ordinary matter without let or hindrance. It is not difficult at any rate to form a picture of a life based upon its organization. From the individual spirits of just men made perfect this present "muddy vesture of decay" has dropped away, leaving them "not unclothed but clothed upon." They are still men. They have rational souls with material bodies fit to sustain and to express their psychical life. The matter of their bodies is obedient to the laws of matter and life, but to the laws of that kind of life and matter. "There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestial" and each has its own modes of action. Such ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe of their own, even though that universe should occupy the same space that this one does. Neither earth nor fire nor water could in the least impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they could speed from where old Bootes leads his leash to where Sagittarius draws his bow in the south. With bodies of such fine stuff compounded, and so plastic to the uses of the spirit, their knowledge would be so acute and delicately balanced as to be capable of thrills of pleasure so transcendent, and of pain so poignant, that the experience of this present life probably gives us no comparison to estimate them by. Love could have its perfect way where there would be perfect comprehension. In the present stage no personality ever knows really very much of any other. Each is shut within a body which at the best can only partially reveal it. Each living soul can but make itself known and can gain knowledge of another through physical media which are limited by the qualities of the matter which compose them. The mind is continually weighed down and retarded by the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. No doubt the ethereal body is also subject to its own ills. But being in close relation to the psychical life and immeasurably better fitted to be the vehicle for its expression, knowledge and love must have opened to them possibilities, not infinite indeed, but so extended that we may not even try to guess their limits.

All this is based upon two propositions, first, that any possible future life must be an embodied life and second, that there is such a material stuff as may serve the uses and needs of such a life. It is an hypothesis, fantastic it may be, but every advancing step of human knowledge has been gained by an hypothesis. If the theory be found to bring into coherence facts which are known to be facts, and make them intelligible and lead to the discovery of other facts till then unknown, it slowly changes from an hypothesis to a conviction. Will this one bear that test?

Has Christianity anything to say?

Christianity's contribution to the problem of the future life concerns the body only. It has no new definition of the soul. As to that it accepts the conceptions always and everywhere current. Its distinguishing tenet is that which the Creed crudely expresses: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Upon that its whole future rests. Withdraw that and it might still remain a religion but it would not be Christianity. It was first heralded as "The Gospel of the Resurrection." That was its attraction, but the language of the whole New Testament shows that it did not mean by resurrection the resuscitation of a cadaver, either soon or later. But it does agree surprisingly with the conceivable new life which I have sketched above; the stories of the "Resurrection" in the Gospels seems to fit strangely into such a conception as that set forth above. They represent the risen Christ as a living man like other men, but strangely unlike, and they make no attempt to adjust the contradictions. He is independent of the laws of matter and at the same time conforms to some of them. He suddenly appears in a lighted room when the doors are locked. Again, he communicates with men by some kind of spoken language, but is at the same time invisible. He is walking along the road to Emmaus with two friends, and presently is standing on the bank of the Galilean lake, fifty miles away. They see him and take him for a stranger but next moment recognize him, and he vanishes. We seem to be in the presence of something which is both material and immaterial, something which is cognizable by the senses and at the same time confuses them.

Now, one may dismiss this altogether as an Oriental fantasy, but then, again, he may extend his definition of matter so as to include the phenomena. The amazing discoveries of the nature and potentialities of matter make it at least conceivable. Of course one may, if he will, look at these phenomena as prying into a sacred region into which curiosity may not enter and where faith alone is allowable. But there is such a thing as sitting down at the entrance of a holy place under pretense of putting off one's shoes, while the real motive is either indolence or fear. If the phenomena under consideration are facts at all, then they are facts meant for us. The whole New Testament is intelligible only on some such conception.

A distinguished philosopher criticizing this hypothesis has said that "the essential weakness of such a theory as this lies in the fact that it is thoroughly materialistic in character. By it the putting on of immortality is in no wise the passage from a material to a spiritual state. It is the passage from one kind of a materially conditioned state to another." This, I conceive, is precisely where its strength resides. It turns away from that phantasmal region of "disembodied ghosts," and looks for the hope of continued existence at the top of the hill, but in the line of the same path up which life has been climbing throughout the æons. Our souls shrink from disembodied being with a repugnance which cannot be overcome by any alluring visions. Much as we may yearn for immortality, we would rather miss it than possess it under conditions of which we can form no conception and which terrify by their strangeness. The passage into life at any stage is never terrifying to the new creature being born, whatever pangs it may cost the eternal mother.

Professor Shaler, Dean of the Scientific Faculty of Harvard, says: "A number of men of no mean authority as naturalists, some of them well trained in experimental science, have, after long and apparently careful inquiry, become convinced that there is evidence of the survival of some minds after death." This is a conclusion which sensible men will reach very hesitatingly. The evidence, if evidence it can be called, is found by an analysis of that enormous but unsavory mass of "Spiritism," "Occultism," "Telepathy," "Hypnotism," and such like. It is a material with which sane men are very reluctant to deal. It is so contaminated by fraud, charlatanry, credulity, and hysterics that one's natural inclination is to pass by it as far on the other side the way as the width of the road will allow. But at the same time it must be confessed that there is "something in it." If the subject of supernormal phenomena be brought into discussion in club or drawing-room—and strange accounts are exchanged of alleged instances—the chances are that seven out of ten present will end by giving their assent to Hamlet's dictum: "There be a thousand things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio." It is not easy to find even an educated man who will categorically deny the assertion that there are instances wherein one human personality communicates with another without known physical media of intercourse. At any rate, the belief in the actual occurrence of hypnotic suggestion and telepathic communication has come to be quite general. The proof is very difficult to come at. When one arises from reading the reports of the Society of Psychical Research, or the reported experiments of Hyslop or Lodge, he finds himself in a very exasperating mental state. It is not so much that he has found what appears like a fact here and there scattered through a mass of fraud and self-deception. If that were all, he could reasonably dismiss the whole matter, saying *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.* But that is not all. He has the impression that he is here in the presence of some kind of natural phenomena which are real, but which are being exploited by the wrong people. He is not much better satisfied when he finishes the report of a "Commission" of lawyers and scientists appointed by a great university to investigate the alleged facts. He feels that here again the question is in the wrong hands. If the one set are too credulous, the other are too dogmatic.

The truth would seem to be that we are beginning to take serious account of a set of unclassified psychic phenomena which correspond very closely with a newly described set of physical phenomena.

The unthinking person is prone to regard such things as wireless telegraphy and Roentgen photography and Radio transmission as merely inventions or discoveries which are only a little more wonderful in degree than the hundreds which precede them, but not differing from them in kind. This misapprehends their significance. They are discoveries in an entirely new region. They are doors opened into another universe. It is a material universe, to be sure, and one which we now see to have been about us always. Its existence had long been suspected, but there was no proof, and there did not seem to be any reason or faculty by which proof could be made. It is a universe where ordinary laws of matter are inoperative, indeed, appear to be non-existent, but of its reality no one any longer doubts.

Now, coinciding with these new and strange phenomena of the physical universe, there appear to be equally strange phenomena of the psychical world. Is it too much to believe that the two are in some way correlated? That living mind can and does, under certain unusual conditions, act upon other living minds without the medium of "matter" can hardly be any longer questioned. Whether it be a "departed" spirit touching a living one, or one living one touching another, seems to me of little consequence. The one is antecedently just as credible or as incredible as the other.

The conditions of such psychical movement are not yet known. Whether or not they ever will be, no one can say, but there seems to be on the part of the scientific world a growing disposition to examine them with a better temper than heretofore. Not to speak of Sir Oliver Lodge, whose dicta in this region can scarcely be taken seriously, physicists and psychologists of sanity and distinguished and practical men are addressing themselves to a study of this region in a way from which much may be hoped. So far, all indications point to the belief that all such equivocal phenomena have their place in a region which is not really "spiritual in the sense in which that word is usually used, but in one which is 'material,' though not in the sense which that word ordinarily connotes. In a word, the last discovery in physics and the last experimentation in psychology seem to be approaching each other."

The way in which all this concerns our theory of the other life ought now to be evident. If that life be one which involves and requires the interaction of spirit and matter, and demands it at a time when the matter which ordinarily serves the spirit for its expression shall not be available, it is much to be even thus tentatively convinced that spirit can function under other conditions than those which belong to the ordinary life of man. It gives point and direction to ancient and widespread, but vague and unfruitful, hopes and beliefs. As Professor Shaler judiciously says:

"Notwithstanding this urgent disinclination to meddle with or be muddled by the problems of spiritism, the men of science have a natural interest in the inquiries of the few true observers who are dredging in that dirty sea. Trusting to the evident scientific faithfulness of these hardy explorers, it appears evident that they have brought up from that deep certain facts which, though still shadowed by doubt, indicate the persistence of the individual consciousness after death. It has, moreover, to be confessed that these few, as yet imperfect, observations are fortified by the fact that through all the ages of his contact with nature man has firmly held to the notion that the world was peopled with disembodied individualities which could appeal to his own intelligence. Such a conviction is itself worth something, though it be little. Supported by any critical evidence it becomes of much value. Thus we may fairly conjecture that we may be on the verge of something like a demonstration that the individual consciousness does survive the death of the body by which it was nurtured."

The individual man is a complex being of spirit and body. Each of them appears to be essential to the very existence of the other. But the body is under a law which has decreed its destruction at threescore and ten or thereabouts. The crucial question then is, When and under what conditions does the spirit begin to establish a nexus with a physical basis of life which may be more abiding? The law of the Conservation of Energy does not avail us here. It may very well be that every unit of vital energy may be transmitted into energy in some other form when its body becomes no longer able to maintain it. This is sufficient for the lower forms of life. They only seek to keep their species going. But this does not satisfy us. We want the continuous life of the individual. But it is clear that this life cannot begin until the fact of individuality is clearly present. Now, in what does the essence of personality consist? In the lower animals there is really no such thing. Each one is but a unit, and the real entity is the herd, the flock, the species, the trees. Where, then, does personality begin? It can begin only at the point where the sense of relationship with other personalities begins. But this is the place where the moral faculty emerges. The conscience is the faculty which feels the sense of obligation to other personalities. It is kept alive by the stimuli which comes from other persons. Its characteristic sensation is sympathy. It lives by going out of itself. Thus, by another path, we reach the elemental truth that "whoso saveth his life shall lose it, and whoso loseth his life shall find it." No progression in mere intelligence will fill the requirements. An intelligence of such high order that it might understand every possible relation of the individual would still be utterly different in kind from a moral sense which can feel these relationships. Sensation is the evidence of life. Immortality is always associated with goodness. Until moral sensibility become self-conscious, all question of personal immortality is irrelevant, because there is, accurately speaking, no personality to be immortal. Up to that point the individual living creature, whether in "human" form or not, falls short of that essential personality for which eternal life can have any meaning. All that lies below is in the material order, or in the cosmic order, and not in the kingdom of persons. In a certain rough and ready fashion we actually deal with individuals on this basis. We do not count as persons those whom we cannot credit with moral discrimination. When that stage is reached, however, in the case of an individual, we may fairly expect that he, in virtue of the fact, will enter upon a new phase of being, and by all the analogies of nature we may expect that his life history from that point onward will show phenomena which appear to have little or nothing in common with what preceded.

In the study of nature, whether organic or inorganic, one of the most amazing things is the way in which every now and then a continuous progress is broken at a "critical point," and is lifted up into an entirely new realm. One of the most familiar instances of these is the behavior of that common substance, water, under the influence of heat. Between thirty-two and two hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit it is a ponderable, colorless fluid whose properties are familiar, and whose phenomena are uniform. Suppose that one had never seen it at any temperature higher or lower than these, he would have had no suspicion that it could or would behave in any other way or show any other properties. But let him abstract its heat slowly down toward the freezing point. Until it reaches thirty-two degrees it is still the same substance about which he had supposed his knowledge to be complete. Thereupon it is suddenly, and for reasons about which absolutely nothing is known, transmuted into an utterly different thing. The properties which it possessed an instant before are gone, and a new set take their place. Its whole mode of existence is transformed. It has become a new creation. A still more significant "critical point" is the one where inorganic matter passes into protoplasm. It is true that no one has ever, as yet, seen this transformation occur. It is altogether probable, however, that it is occurring incessantly, that as organized matter is continually falling into disintegration at one side of the process it is continually being re-created at the other. The conditions cannot or, at any rate, have not been produced artificially. All indications are that the process has its place in the realm of the infinitely minute, where the microscope cannot penetrate. But the inorganic can be discerned at the last stage before the transmutation, and the organic at the first stage thereafter, and though the change occurs at a point so fine that it cannot be located, it is still a change which is practically infinite. The same law of movement obtains throughout the whole path of ascending being. A long series of movements appear to have settled down to the determination to repeat themselves ad infinitum, when, presto, it starts not only in a new life but on a new plane.

If it shall appear, therefore, that the individual who has reached to the stage of self-conscious moral personality has as a consequence come into new relations both to the universe which he inhabits, and to the Supreme Personality of the universe, we need not be surprised. Nor need we be concerned to decide whether the change is "natural" or "supernatural," for all that is is natural in its sphere. It accords with the terminology of Scripture and science both to say that "he has become a new creature," that he "has passed from death unto life," that he has "been born again," that "he is no longer subject to the law of sin and death." It is probable, moreover, that the subject of this new birth is usually more or less conscious of the fact. In the Christian vocabulary it is spoken of as an emotion, ill defined. But some emotion, which may be called by this name or some other, seems to be a common experience of all those individuals whose moral sense has awakened to self-consciousness. Even if it be not identified by the subject at the moment of its beginning, it lies in the consciousness as an abiding sense whereby spiritual qualities are discerned. If it be asked, therefore, "Who are they among men who are thus born from above?" the answer is, "They are all those who are capable of asking that question." No one can interrogate life unless he be alive. To ask the question shows that the inquirer is living. But it must be actually an inquiry prompted from within, and not an echo from around him; a spontaneous outreaching of the spirit toward being, not merely a curious question put by the intelligence to a spirit indifferent to the reply.

Within Christian circles this passage of the individual into a higher plane of being has been traditionally associated with certain objective instrumentalities known as "Sacraments." But while in general this association has been regarded as a reality, there has never been any clear agreement as to its rationale. A vulgar and unintelligent opinion has widely prevailed, to be sure, that the quickening into a more exalted life is actually dependent upon the exhibition of the sacrament in every instance. But this opinion has never gained for itself the sanction of either creeds or theologians. The most that these have ever affirmed is that there is a constant relation of some sort, not well understood, between the life and the "sacraments where they may be had." In the first and crucial case when an apostle was called upon to express the rationale in action, St. Peter, at the baptism of Cornelius, used this very significant expression, "Can any man forbid water that these who have received the Holy Spirit, even as we, should not be baptized?" The point to be noted is that the apostle recognized that Cornelius and his companions were already "living." He did not think of the sacrament as the instrument to produce the life, but he did think and act as though it had some actual relation to the life. The other sacrament is always dealt with in the same way. It is "bread," to nourish a life already existent; it is "wine," to invigorate an energy already present. The elemental concept of the sacramental idea seems to be to emphasize and keep alive the truth that even the most exalted form of spiritual life still has a necessary nexus with matter on the one hand, and that on the other its own essential qualities are moral purity, of which water is the counterpart in the physical realm, and sympathetic affection which is best expressed by brethren breaking bread with one another. But in no case has the Christian Church ever asserted or believed that the citizenship of the New Kingdom can be populated only by this means.

There is yet an outlying difficulty which I approach with hesitation because I am not able to see a solution which is altogether satisfactory. Throughout this study in spiritual biology, I have assumed that the subjects of the classification which we seek are adult men and women. That is to say, they are individuals who have advanced so far toward complete human development that they may fairly be examined for our purpose. But what of the infant, the immature, the undeveloped, whose physical life is broken up? To this it may at least be replied that the marvelous possibilities which are seen to lie in the law of heredity may well contain all that is needed here. When we consider what actually is carried over from parent to child through the microscopic bridge of a single cell, we need not despair of heredity doing for the soul as it does for the body. That ethical qualities, when they exist, are transmissible, is a common experience. It would at least be no violation of the analogies of Scripture and nature if the child of one who has achieved life eternal should also prove to be immortal. Where, or how, or under what circumstances its development may take place is the same question, no more and no less difficult, under any theory of a future life. Our theory has in its favor that so far as any answer at all can be given it gives it in terms of processes which we know to be real.

The idea of eternal life has always been associated with the idea of moral goodness. Evil and death are correlatives. Righteousness and long life; sin and disintegration—this in some way men have always believed to be a fundamental truth. This belief is not so much the outcome of reason and experience as it is a sort of instinct. The wicked man does in fact live out far more than "half his days." But the feeling is always that it ought not to be so. Sin is violation of law, and all animate nature bears testimony that the individual who violates it does so at peril to its being, and that sin when complete ends in death. The law and the fact correspond. It is only where "penalty" is substituted for death that the law is obscured. The one issue is in the natural order of things and therefore inevitable, while the other is artificial and the violator hopes for escape.

The operation of the law can be seen more readily when viewed on a large scale. In a very real sense, a race, or a people, or a nation is an individual, with a personality of its own. The whole history of the humanity is strewn with the dust of extinct peoples. In a considerable number of instances their rise, climax, decline, and decay lie within the historic period. No doubt these arose from among the ruins of still earlier peoples. Why have some survived and others perished? No doubt physical causes account in part. Changes in climate, destruction by more powerful peoples and the like. A well-known historian and sociologist in his book on Social Evolution argues convincingly that a people's continuance in being depends upon moral far more than on physical or intellectual causes. He quotes and endorses the assertion that the physical and intellectual equipment of the average Greek of the age of Pericles was notably higher than that of the average Englishman or American of to-day. It is very possible that Babylonians, Egyptians and Persians equaled us in these regards. Why have they decayed and disappeared? The phallic symbols strewing the ruins by the Euphrates, the abominations sketched on the walls of Pompeii, the contemned "Græculus" of the Levant explain. What prevented the American Indian, possessing since the dawn of time the most abundant region of the earth, and with his great mental endowment, from developing a civilization which would have been abiding? What of the African living for ages in the world's garden? What accounts for the decadence of Spain, and for the unburied corpse of China? What accounts for the ruin of Rome and Byzantium and the peoples of Asia Minor and North Africa? The answer in every case is the same: They decayed from the lack of some moral quality. Another race has endured and promises to endure in virtue of certain racial moral qualities which they developed ages ago and which have saved them from being brutalized by their own vigor or sinking in their congenital stupidity. Moral goodness, therefore, can arrest and turn back the physical law of growth, vigor, decline and decay. Is it too much to believe that the law holds for the individual man?

But if anything like this be true it follows that one's chance of a future life depends upon a present fact. Does one, or does he not possess a moral energy sufficiently strong and coherent to dominate his life? The mere possession of a potential faculty for goodness will not suffice. Brutes have that much. The races which perished had as much. Only a moral sense developed far enough to have "its seed in itself" will suffice. The mere recognition of and conformity to conventional demands is not enough. Flocks and herds do that. Only a moral structure developed far enough to override turbulent appetites, ebulient passions and errant thoughts will serve the end. Now, it is clear that some persons possess this quality and some do not. It is a quality of soul correlated in some degree, but not closely, with intellectual forwardness. A simple hind may be very good, and an undevout astronomer be destitute of moral sense. We have seen above that there are now living whole races of undeveloped savages who have no more moral energy than the brutes—for it must be remembered that the brutes have some. It is true they obey the conventions of the tribe, but this only from custom or self-interest and not from inward impulse. To raise concerning them the question of immortality would surely seem irrelevant or premature. They have not yet entered into the human life which now is, let alone that to come. As in every stage of biological advance an individual here and there no doubt wins for himself the power of indefinite progress.

The place of escape from out the closed ring which we call nature is not the body or the mind, but the moral endowment. If that gate be not there, or if it be too narrow for egress, there cannot in the nature of the case be any thoroughfare. Nor is it easy to expect immortality for multitudes far nearer to us than are Pygmies or Bushmen. When I look inward at myself at such time as I see only there the brute, or when I wander observantly among the crowds which teem in the purlieus of a great city, as I watch their faces, listen to their meager speech, penetrate to the interior of their shallow lives, realize their brutality, mischievousness and cunning intelligence, become familiar with their desires and ideals of life, above all as I see their look of blank insensibility to any moral appeal, I am hard put to it not to ask myself, Are these really men? I confess frankly then, when as a preacher I have tried to speak to certain kinds of men "of righteousness and judgment to come," I have felt that the effort was little less vain than would have been the same exhortation to my good dog. One can, it is true, make his appeal to the fear of damnation, and thus evoke a response in the form of terror. But I can do the same by pointing my gun at a predatory crow. The fear of death and the belief in a future life are quite different things. The natural man's Paradise may be Edenic, or it may be meager and squalid, but he does not come in sight of the tree of life till he leaves it. Myriads still dwell within it, being even now as the "first man" was. While at that stage the question concerns biology, zoölogy, anthropology, religion simply cannot speak to him at all until he becomes "as a god, knowing good and evil." When this stage is reached, and not till then, does eternal life come within the possibilities. "This is eternal life to know God" and God is apprehended only through the moral sense.

"Are there few then, that shall be saved?" Jesus was asked. He replied, "Strive strenuously to enter in the straight gate, for straight is the gate and narrow is the way and few there be that find it."

We may admit without hesitation that it is impossible to define the point at which the capacity of eternal life is reached in the development of the individual. This does not touch the essential truth. No physicist can draw a line and say, Here organic matter begins; no botanist can say, Here vegetable life passes on into animal; no naturalist can say, Here the invertebrate ends and the vertebrate begins; no psychologist can say, Here instinct ends and reason begins; no anthropologist can draw a line below man, or among men or in the life of the individual and say, Here, now, is the moral sense. But facts do not cease to be because their classification is impracticable. We may expect it to be true in the moral realm as it is in the physical, that only those survive which are worth surviving. It ought not to be a surprise, and to many would be a relief to find this to be also the teaching of Holy Scripture.

The latest human faculty to be evolved is the Conscience. When it does appear it dominates all the others. It's evolution has been slow. Between the point where moral sensibility begins in the beast and the point where it is regnant in the highest type of man, æons lie. Until it is developed, there is no avenue leading out from the closed ring of matter. Bergson has well shown that the intellect at its highest can only deal with matter or material images. It is Euclidean, not celestial. The gateway to the spiritual universe is Conscience.

*"Have you done*
*Descending? Here's ourself,—man known today*
*Duly evolved at last; so far, you say,*
*The sum and seal of beings progress. Good!*
*Thus much at least is clearly understood—*
*Of power does Man possess no particle!*
*Of knowledge—just so much as shows that still*
*It ends in ignorance on every side:*
*But righteousness—ah, men are deified*
*Thereby, for compensation."*

BROWNING

# CHAPTER V

This is probably the most suitable point at which to connect the argument with Christ and Christianity. Inasmuch as it is only within Christendom that the belief in eternal life generally prevails and is popularly associated with the person and work of Jesus Christ, it is necessary to examine what Christianity has really to say in the matter. It is not easy to determine this. Jesus' own words are ambiguous and the writings of his followers are even more so. Moreover there are within them so many concepts and assumptions surviving from the Pagan and Jewish worlds that it is not easy to distinguish what is of the essential of Christianity. I would give much to know what was the thought of Jesus in the matter. In general, it is clear that he associated eternal life with goodness. Whenever, and not until, an individual reaches the point to "know good and evil," he becomes potentially immortal. But he must *know* good and evil, not merely accept the distinctions enacted by customs or society. The faculty is a very different thing from the intellectual capacity to discern that certain actions are allowed and others forbidden by an extraneous authority. This latter the savage has and so has my dog. The ethical faculty does not function until it is able to respond to ethical stimulations. It must discern moral qualities quite independent of prescription. It must be able not only to know but to feel "I ought" and "I ought not." When this stage is reached the possibility is reached of some sort of relation with "the Eternal Power, not ourselves which makes for righteousness." "This is life eternal to know God," says Jesus. "We all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory," says St. Paul.

At this point the individual man, knowing good and evil, begins to be as gods, and to take on the image and likeness of God. If any abiding relation with the Eternal be possible, it must be through some expansion or metamorphosis of this final element in the soul. This was his "Way." He committed himself unreservedly to the good. Through this nexus he identified himself completely with God. His consciousness becomes merged in the divine consciousness. He loses his sense of human individuality. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me"—then he knows his own immortality. In a word he escapes from the mortality which belongs to the natural man through the gate of goodness. Then he turns to his hearers and bids them do the same. He makes no attempt to disguise the cost to those who determine to follow after him. It demands strenuous effort. Indeed, he assures them plainly that except a man deny himself and take up his cross he cannot reach the goal. There is no virtue in the cross; it is a means to an end. But he declares that way, and that way only, life can be achieved. The other way ends not in penalty, but in disintegration. Immortality is correlated with goodness. St. Paul, after a long and self-sacrificing life of devotion, is content to say for himself that he neither knows nor cares for anything else but that he may understand "Christ" and the power of his resurrection and to imitate his life, if need be even unto death, in order that he "might by any means attain unto the resurrection of the dead." His fundamental conviction is that escape from the closed circle of natural life is only possible "through Christ."

Here we face an obstinate difficulty: What is "Christ"? In the continent of human life Christianity occupies but an insignificant space. It covers but two score out of the millions of centuries of human progression. Those who ever did or could have heard of the historic Jesus are but an infinitesimal fraction of that mighty host of human beings who have appeared and passed off this world's stage. A means of attaining immortality, therefore, which would only be attainable after a certain date A.U.C., and within a certain geographical area, could be only a mockery. It would be like a zoölogy whose laws would hold only within a thiergarten and be inapplicable to the beasts of the field. It would be little to call such a device unscientific when we might justly call it profoundly immoral. We are in search of a bridge by which it may be possible to pass from this present life to another. Common equity demands that the hither end of the bridge should be placed within reach of the first man who could and wished to cross. We cannot believe that the great Architect should either have postponed its construction until countless generations had perished on this side the flood, or that he should have placed it in a position to be available only to an elect few after an arbitrary date. Let the conditions of eternal life be as inexorable as they may prove to be. We are familiar with that law at every step of the organic movement. No one will gainsay a rigid selection of the individuals who survive out of the multitudes who perish. We can see the reasonableness of this, and to some extent, the beneficence of it. But the moral sense demands that the selection shall be a *natural* and not an arbitrary one. Time was when devout men denounced the phrase "natural selection" because it circumscribed the operation of God's intelligence. They had not realized the unspeakable relief it brought to belief in God's righteousness. Even the gift of eternal life might scarcely be welcomed if it come tainted with favoritism. "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive," may serve as the conception of God current at the court of Belshazzar; but the moral sense of to-day can only so conceive of Baal.

But are we not as Christians committed to the belief that "there is no other name given under heaven whereby they may be saved but the name of Christ"? I think so; but I think the fact has wide implications seldom realized. If eternal life be in any way correlated with him, it must be in some way which is independent upon times and dates and missionaries. The great apostle could only be restrained for a passing moment within the meager syllogism that men could not call on him on whom they had not heard and they could not hear without a preacher. "But I say," he bursts out, "Have they not heard? Yes verily the sound went into all the earth, and the words into the ends of the Cosmos." For him, the "Christ" was a transcendental person, or force, equivalent to the Logos of St. John; "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In his thinking, the nexus of the eternal "Christ" with the historic Jesus was slight. The Christ which was and is and is yet to be is available under the same conditions to all men at all times. For this he must be undependent upon biography or history. The Life of the world must be ready to flow wherever, at any time or place, a psychical organism is ready to receive it. The theological schemes of "Atonement" give us little help. They are hopelessly artificial and unreal. They attempt to state the function of the eternal Christ in terms of Hebrew Sacrifice and Roman Law. One could as well construct a zoölogy in the same terms. Christian thought has been bewildered and Christian instinct well-nigh defeated by centuries of logically coherent but empty systems of so-called doctrine concerning Christ. His terms are biological; theirs are legal. It may be long ere we recover from the misfortune of having had the teaching of Jesus interpreted and fixed by jurists instead of by naturalists. It is as though the rationale of the circulation of the blood had been wrought out by Sir Matthew Hale, or the germ theory of disease interpreted by Blackstone, or the laws of Evolution set out by a legislative council. The "Christ" is intimately and vitally concerned with the eternal life of men, but the matter involved is of their living or perishing, not a question of rewards and penalties. When a book called *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was issued years ago it was seized upon with an amazing eagerness. It was shallow and full of doubtful analogies, but the title said a thing which men wished said. Before, and since, multitudes here tried to give utterance to the same conception. Religion is trying to escape from the dreary fortress of law to the open world of nature. This is the heart of the "conflict of Religion and Science." It is the contest of artificiality and reality. I venture to think that Darwin and the martyrs of science have done more to make the Christ intelligible than have Augustine or Calvin.

It is amazing the way in which the words of Jesus fit the forms of thought current to-day. They are life, generation, survival of the fit, perishing of the unfit, tree and fruit, transforming the mass by hidden cells silently working like leaven, or by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce fruit, imposition of a higher form of growth on a lower like grafting, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade, the ear, to the matured grain, and finally the attainment of an individual life which has taken on an eternal quality. The claim made for the Christ is that he has to do with this vital process in a vital fashion from the beginning of the ages to the end of them. This claim may or may not be more difficult for thoughtful men to admit than the claim that he wrought out a means of legal escape for some men from judicial sentence. But whatever difficulty attaches to it is an intellectual and not an ethical one. It may be incredible, if one will, but it is not immoral. But no one will deny that the wages of lawlessness is death, whatever he may think about eternal life being correlated with the Christ.

Here as well as any other time it is proper to consider the arguments for a "Conditional Immortality" which have been at various times proposed; some belief of the sort has always been more or less prevalent in Christendom. It was held by most of the early Fathers, but in a very confused and contradictory fashion. After the triumph of Augustine's legalistic system of theology, it has not had many advocates. But the differences among men, both as to their moral natures and their moral opportunities, are always so palpable that the Christian mind could not remain content with Augustine's mechanical conceptions of a universal resurrection and a hard and fast division of all men between an eternal heaven and an eternal hell. Out of this revolt came the highly elaborate but equally artificial device of Purgatory. This device satisfied until the authority of the Church, upon which it depended, broke down in the sixteenth century. Then the old question emerged again: Do the "wicked" live forever, and is there no remede for their woe? "Universalism" cut the knot by ignoring any distinction between the good and the evil as to their destiny. On the assumption that every human is immortal in virtue of his humanity, there seemed to be no escape from a conclusion so dreadful that no man could contemplate it for even his enemies and still find life tolerable. Judged by any moral standard the proportion of the "wicked" to the "righteous" is surely very great. If they are so constituted by nature that the poor boon of extinction is forever impossible for them, what can one think of a Creator, who fashions such Frankenstein monsters! Some relief for the imagination and the moral sense must be had. Most, probably, find their comfort by refusing to think about painful things. Some have pleased themselves by fancying an universal "restoration" wherein the multitudinous "wicked," having learned goodness through the experience of æonian pain, shall win their way to blessedness. But this consolatory belief can only be held at the expense of confusion of thought. When once steadfastly held before the understanding, it breaks up through its essential incoherence.

The only alternatives which will bear the test are either: (1) that death ends all for every man; or (2) that immortality is a possibility only for those to whom it would be a boon. There is much reason to believe that the first alternative is becoming more and more widely accepted because the second has been so generally forgotten. One wonders why the doctrine for conditional immortality has been so little operative, seeing that it has such powerful advocates. When we remember that throughout the New Testament the hope of resurrection is always dependent upon the individual having become "united to Christ" and that no other way of "attaining to the resurrection" is intimated, it is strange that this doctrine has, in modern times, been so generally brushed aside as a vagary. It is sustained by appeal to Scripture and to the logic of the case. It has been maintained by men of the first rank—Spinoza, Goethe, Lotze, Priestly, Whately, White—surely it cannot be dismissed as fantastic or whimsical. And yet it must be confessed their arguments have failed to produce any deep or wide impression. The drift appears to be steadily toward the denial of future life to all men. There must be some reason for this. Either the advocates of "Conditional immortality" have introduced some element which renders it impossible, or they have left out some necessary element, or they have proposed the wrong conditions. I think they have done all three. Moreover, the time was not ripe. It had to wait until modern science revealed more of the origin and nature and constitution of man.

Their fundamental error is the one which I have dwelt upon. They have dealt with "Man" in the abstract. They have assumed that the zoölogical classification which sets man in a group by himself for physical purposes is a valid classification for psychical purposes. They have taken for granted that the question of eternal life is the same for all individuals, and that every individual stands before it in the same position because he is a "man." The real state of the case is, The question only concerns those who have reached the stage of development where it has a meaning. Before the inquiry concerning the future life of an individual can have any cogency there is a previous one, Is he living now? That is the point at which the supreme biological classification must be attempted.

In the second place, because they have assumed that all human beings *qua* human are in like situation as candidates for immortality, they have been obliged to announce conditions of success which are clearly inapplicable and artificial. Some of the Fathers expect eternal life only for those who have been baptized; others for only those who have received the "body and blood of Christ" in the Eucharist. At a later date they make it depend upon an intelligent acceptance of the historic Christ and an act of faith in Him. The philosophers at the same time chiefly dwelt upon intellectual advancement. Now these conditions named are so arbitrary, artificial, meager, so impossible of application to the great multitude of humanity, so trivial in face of the infinite issue involved, that it is little wonder their exhibition receives scant attention.

What is demanded is a law of eternal life which will exhibit that majestic sweep of movement, that same naturalness, that moral equity, which nature shows, and which will be free from all taint of favoritism, as nature is. This law should seem to be plain enough if we would frankly recognize the facts of life. Immortality is a moral achievement possible where goodness is, impossible where goodness is not.

But if this be so, it is not thus loosened from all dependence upon the being and work of Christ. The answer is, That depends upon what you mean by Christ. If the Christ be figured only as a person in human history occupying a certain place, in time and space, then the objection would be fatal. Then neither Adam nor Moses, Job nor Socrates nor Gautama would owe their life to him. But he does not come within so meager a definition. In the beginning with God; the Wisdom of the æons; sharing the eternal pain of God before the world was; divinity is not to be brought within the categories of duration and extension. The eternal spirit of Life is not functionless until set in play in an assembly of disciples in Jerusalem, A.D. 33. It is not essential that the work of the "Christ" be confined to those who know him by the Judæan name of Jesus. The phrases used in the New Testament may be rightly deemed but new names for an old thing. Being "united to Christ," being "born from above" the "life hid with Christ in God," and such like are but the Christian terminology for phenomena which show themselves independent of date or geography. But they are moral phenomena with which he claims a vital connection even though they be called by very different names from those which his followers use. Eternal life is attained through goodness; and wherever goodness is, He is.

For many, it would be enough to have some definite word from Jesus Christ about the future life. However one may appraise him his word must carry weight. If he be divine and come out from God, his information would be first and final. If he be only a man, he holds so exalted a place in human estimation that even his opinion must weigh. An explicit *dictum* from him would, for many, put an end to all doubt. I go to the story of his life in the Gospels for information and pose two inquiries: Just what did he say? and, What did he mean? To answer the first of these is most difficult. The record is so meager and in part so contradictory that one cannot be sure. The first three Gospels are history, of a sort, but not such as can be appealed to with confidence as to actual facts. They are fragmentary, scanty, incomplete. Moreover, they are written from memory thirty to fifty years after the event. No spoken words thus recorded can be altogether accurate and trustworthy. Still the story has verisimilitude, and in any case it is all we have. There are only about half-a-dozen allusions by him, in the first three Gospels, to a future life. Here is the whole of it:

"He shall reward every man according to his works." "What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Fear him who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna." "Those who shall be accounted worthy to attain the other world and the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage." "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared." "As for the resurrection of the dead have you not read what was said to you by God. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He is not a God of dead people but of living ones." "Then you will be blessed, for as they [the poor] have no means of repaying you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Besides this there are the Parables of the Foolish Virgins, and the Rich Man and Lazarus.

By far the larger portion of his references to the future life are contained in the fourth Gospel of

St. John. This has no historic value. It is impossible to tell whether it was written to tell the story of a real personality or to construct a personality which would fit a preconceived ideal. If it be the story of an actual person it is still impossible to distinguish which are his own utterances and which are put in his mouth by the author.

But the fact that the language was intelligible to his contemporaries is proof that his general presumptions were the same as theirs. But it is a simple matter of history that the people he lived among and spoke to were not believers in the "immortality of the soul" in our sense. He took for his premises the beliefs which his hearers entertained, the beliefs current in his time and place. It is at once most necessary and most difficult to keep in mind that his hearers did not have at all the beliefs which are taken for granted now. It was an age of unusual religious interest and many questionings. The scattered cults and religions of the world were fusing together with attendant ebulition. Some believed in no future life at all. Some believed in a corporate immortality for the people Israel, with which individual continuance was not involved. Some believed in the resurrection of all the individuals of the race of Abraham alone. Some looked for immortality of the righteous only of that race. But nobody believed in the immortality of every human being as such. Says Edward Lucas White in *Why Rome Fell:* "The current notion throughout the Greco-Roman pagan world was that survival after death was not a matter of course and certainty for every human being born, but was a personal boon, won by personal merit. They would have scouted the suggestion that there was any Life after death for a slave, or a peasant. On the other hand, all felt sure of the survival of every worthy and beloved wife and mother and still more of every citizen in good standing. This general attitude of mind among the population at large was wholly unaffected by the speculations of philosophers and by the teachings of their disciples and admirers. Belief in life after death was indefinite, nebulous, vague. For most human beings after death, a very ghostly survival was the most that could be expected and comfort after death depended on adequate burial rites and being remembered by the living." This is the testimony of the highest authority on contemporary belief in the Roman world at the time. If Jesus had held the beliefs common among us as to the immortality of the soul and the resurrection he could not have made himself understood by his contemporaries. The beliefs actually existing among his hearers, diverse as they were, served his purpose well enough. The assumptions now current would have defeated his purpose and made his teaching unintelligible.

Here again it is essential to get rid, if possible, of an almost universal misapprehension. The antithesis "life and death" in religious phraseology has come to mean the alternative of happiness or misery after life is ended. It has meant heaven or hell. "Life," in religion, is thought of as something supernal added to the present spiritual faculties of the individual, or a transformation of the individual character into something more exalted which expresses itself in a finer ethical conduct, and death as a deterioration of the spiritual sense. They are used as synonymous with pardoned or condemned, saved or lost, but as predicates of a soul destined to endless existence in any case. They are terms used to connote qualities of existence, not as meaning starkly being or ceasing to be, living or perishing. Until this prepossession is escaped—and that requires a strenuous effort—the words of Jesus are unintelligible. Therefore, when we find Jesus using such antitheses as "life and death," "eternal life and destruction," "living and perishing," we must assume that he used the terms in their obvious and natural sense. But we do not; we have been so long accustomed to think that in religious speech eternal *life* means eternal happiness and eternal *death* eternal misery, that it requires a strenuous and steadfast effort to see in Christ's words what they meant and what they only could have meant to those who heard them. It is conceivable that the import of his terms was larger than they realized, but they could not have connoted something incompatible with their obvious sense. He never deals with abstractions. He has nothing to say about "man" but only about men. He never refers to the "soul" or the "human soul" but always to the soul of a definite individual. He never deals with the question of immortality in the abstract, but only with the possibilities and destinies of individuals. He does not assume that man is by nature "mortal" or "immortal"; he simply points out to the individual which way life lies and which way destruction. What is of more importance, he declares that there are many who are congenitally incapable of comprehending him at all. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." In other words, he announces that he speaks only to those whose spiritual faculties are sufficiently developed to be able to respond to the stimulus of his truth.

Bearing these preliminary facts in mind, I ask: What did he believe and say?

If one should weave together the words of Christ as they are scattered through the Gospels he would find that he had before him a biological system, a treatise upon life and death. In it he would find set forth the conditions upon which continuance in being is possible, the perils to which being is exposed, the means to counteract those perils, and the ultimate issue of living. The theme throughout is the individual life. The alternatives exposed are not future pleasure and future pain but living or ceasing to live. Only in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus does the element of pleasure and pain enter, and there only because dramatic fitness requires it.

The Gospels are biological altogether. They speak a language more intelligible to-day than it has ever been before. The imagery is drawn almost exclusively from the processes and phenomena of life. His message is in terms of biology. It is an unspeakable misfortune that its early interpreters should have set it forth in terms of jurisprudence! Owing to this, it has been for centuries bound and strangled in conceptions of law, justice, guilt, satisfaction, pardon, conviction, acquittal, reward and penalty. All these are alien to his message. The question is not of rewards and penalties, but of living or perishing. Whatever of pleasure or pain is implicated at any point is incidental. He begins by stating the situation in terms which the naturalist and the biologist know to be true of life at every stage of evolution:

"Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in there; because straight is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it."

"Of fifty seeds oft nature brings but one to bear." Of the myriad living forms born ten may reach maturity. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have æonian life. He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not pass to catastrophe but hath passed out of death into life. That which is born of the flesh is flesh but that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Whosoever believeth in me shall never die. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. Whosoever believeth on the Son of Man shall not perish but have eternal life. As the Father quickeneth the dead and maketh them living, so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

These quotations which could be extended indefinitely will suffice to show what he meant. All his words are variations upon the same theme.

Apart from his ethical judgments which are contained in his Parables and the so-called Sermon on the Mount his whole speech revolves about two foci. The first is his claim to stand in a peculiar and unique relation to God. This claim he reiterates over and over again all through his life. He "came out from God," he "knoweth the Father," "no man knowest who the Father is but the Son," "he that seeth me seeth God," "before Abraham was I am."

The second focus of his speech is his claim that it is his purpose and within his power so to transform individual men that they will no longer be mortal but immortal. Whether this amazing claim of power is justified by the fact, one may believe or not as he will. But that he asserted this about himself lies on the face of the record. His revelation was a revelation of possible life. He uses neither threats nor promises. He paints no ravishing picture of heaven nor horrible one of hell. He makes his appeal to the instinct of living. If you do thus and so, following in my steps, you can attain a kind of life so prepotent that what you call death cannot ruin it. Blessed are the meek, the pure in heart, the unselfish, for the new biological kingdom belongs to them. If you devote your energies to building up your lower life you will lose everything, because it comes to an end. But if you disregard it in the interest of my eternal gospel of goodness you will find within you an æonian life. What is this but to announce the last term in organic evolution? Natural man becomes immortal.

Now, if this be really the teaching of Jesus how does it come that it has been so long and so universally misinterpreted? If his message was in terms of biology why is it forever presented in terms of law? If his distinction was between a perishable and an abiding life under conditions now existing why has it been interpreted to mean the difference between bliss and misery in a future life, to which all men are destined in any case?

The explanation is not difficult. Both he and his disciples looked for the end of all things within their own lifetimes or at least within a very brief period. They looked for a "New heaven and a new earth." Thus ethical dicta were adjusted to this belief. If the extraordinary demands of the Sermon on the Mount seem to be impossible of practice in a world like this it must be remembered that they were not meant for a world like this. They envisaged a world whose years were well-nigh sped. They concerned those who were to live in the world as not of it while it lasted and whose existence afterwards was guaranteed by Christ who had power to "quicken whom he will." The whole New Testament is dominated by this belief. The "Coming" for which they waited was not that "far off divine event toward which the whole creation moves." It was the great finale which was to arrive while they lived. Now a people who whole-heartedly held such a conviction would of necessity conform their lives to it. The ethics and economics fitted for an enduring world would be altogether unsuited for one which was to perish to-morrow. Believing this, how could they have any concern or interest in the things of common life? Nor did they. They were engrossed with that new immortality which they believed themselves to possess as the gift of their divine Master. In the New Testament all the relations of domestic life and all the obligations of citizenship are either ignored or presented on their passive side. "Leave the dead to bury their dead and come follow me." "If a man love father or mother more than me he is not worthy of me." The slave is advised not to care for his liberty on the express ground that it is not worth while. It is better for everyone to regard himself as already dead to a world which is itself under sentence. Even concerning so practical a thing as marriage, Paul counsels his converts that they may marry or not as it pleases them, but on the whole he advises against it because the time is short and their energies had better not be withdrawn from the solemn waiting and preparation.

But their expectations were disappointed. The years continued and the King did not come. The Gospel, the "good news," of Jesus was that there is a way of life for men who had not expected it. This new hope took possession of his followers. They looked for its present fulfillment. When this hope failed them there was nothing for it but to organize the old enthusiasm into a New Cult. This was done. The resulting syncretism of Greek magic and philosophy and Roman law is what we have had for eighteen centuries.

Imbedded in it and well-nigh forgotten in its popular presentation, Jesus' conception of life shows in the two Sacraments: *Renatus in æternum,* reborn in the waters of Baptism, and, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul to eternal life," in the Mass.

To learn the immediate effect of his "Gospel" upon them we must listen to his first interpreters:

"For we know that if the earthen fabric of our tent be dissolved, we have a building from God, a fabric not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For truly in this we groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up in life. We faint not, but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." "All flesh is not the same flesh, there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds, so there are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthen, the second man is of heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthen, let us also bear the image of the heavenly." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now. And not only so, but we ourselves which have the first fruit of the spirit groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, that is to say, the setting free of our body." "And Jesus was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, and behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." "And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them he took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened and they knew him and he vanished out of their sight."[1] "As they were looking he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And as they were earnestly gazing after him as he went into the heavens, behold two men in white vesture stood beside them." "I knew a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I know not), caught up into paradise, and that he heard things of which it is not permissible for a man to speak." "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ."

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[1] Literally, "They gradually ceased to see him."

Such quotations might be extended indefinitely, but these are enough to show that the companions and survivors of Jesus looked with confidence for a future life of such sort that their spirits would not be left naked, but clothed upon with some kind of material substance which was even then being woven for them in the secret place of their own being. Whether or not the ethereal stuff which science now knows may or may not prove to be that which may serve for the physical basis of a continued personal life, it may fairly be said that it fulfills the requisite conditions better than anything else which is known. The late Professor Cope in his *Origin of the Fittest* asks: "Is there any generalized form of matter distributed through the universe then which could sustain consciousness?" And answers: "The presumption is that such a form of matter may well exist."

*"Evolution may be conceived of as resulting in beings capable of proposing to themselves a certain aim, and of dragging nature after them toward it. Natural selection would thus finally be converted into a moral, and, in some sort, divine selection. It can, in effect, produce species and types superior to humanity as we know it; it is not probable that we embody the highest achievement possible in life, thought, and love. Who knows indeed, but that evolution may be able to bring forth, nay has not already brought forth immortals?"*

**M. Guyon**

## CHAPTER VI

The earliest extant literature of Christianity was written from twenty to forty years after the death of Jesus. It consists chiefly of a few letters which have survived out of a mass of correspondence carried on by some of his followers when circumstances had carried them to a distance from each other. These letters are sometimes of an intimate and personal nature, sometimes from a provincial church official to a group of Christians; with the understanding that, being read, they should be passed on to other groups. In such compositions we cannot expect to find any very definite or precise statements of belief. They bear much the same relation to Christianity that the familiar correspondence of Darwin, Gray, Lyell and Huxley do to the Law of Evolution. Here, as always, it is not so much what a man says in familiar speech as what he assumes that shows his real belief. By far the most important among these writers is Paul. Indeed, he may well be said to be the founder of Christianity as a creed and an organization. Of course the only obligation which his *obiter dicta* and that of the other writers carry is that they express and interpret the ideas of Christ. Now the question is, Do they or do they not take for granted the indestructibility of the soul and the natural immortality of all men? Of the answer, there can be no doubt, They do not. Moreover, such an assumption makes their arguments not only worthless but unintelligible. It must also be borne in mind that though they had become Christians they were still dominated by that mass of confused and contradictory notions about the future life among which they had been reared as Jews and pagans. Of course I cannot make a detailed examination and collection of their writings. That would require a treatise by itself, and would be well worth the doing, provided one could be found with the requisite knowledge, and able at the same time to divest himself of all pre-judgments, being content to discover just what the writers meant, and not concerning himself to reconcile them with any doctrine or with each other.

In general it may be said without hesitation that they continue the same biological theme about which the teaching of Jesus revolves. They do not start, however, from the facts of being, but from the accepted fact of his resurrection. But their assumptions are the same as his. The fatal prejudgment to be avoided is that which interprets the terms "life" and "death," "living" and "perishing" as denoting happiness or misery, salvation or damnation.

This pre-judgment not only changes altogether the meaning of the writers, but it leaves unexplained the enthusiasm with which the "gospel of the resurrection" was received. Surely it was something more appealing than the tepid offer of a system to make men morally a little better than they had been. And the offer of a plan by which they might gain a heaven and escape a hell which none of them believed in would have left them cold. The appeal was straight to the "lust of living." And it brought a response which its artificial substitutes has ever since failed to elicit. Says St. James: "Blessed is he who survives the moral test, for when he has been tested he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him. . . . The lust of the carnal nature begets sin, and sin when it is full grown ends in death." But God hath made of us ("who have endured the test") a kind of first fruits of his living things. "Whoso lifteth up an evil one into the plane of living saveth a soul out of death." St. Peter exhorts his fellows to "thank God for his great mercy having re-begotten us into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ into an inheritance incapable of decay or fading, stored up in the heavens for you who are preserved by the power of God for a salvation already made and which will be manifest at the last." "They that walk after the flesh, as being without reason, and born brute beasts, shall in their corruption be surely destroyed." St. John endorses this, declaring that all that is in the kosmos, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, is the empty shadow of life, is kosmic and the kosmos is perishable, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. "He that loveth not abideth among the dead, for whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that a murderer hath no life in him." Neither St. Peter, James nor John intimate anywhere in their letters that they have the remotest expectation of continued existence for any except those who fulfill the condition which is the burden of their message. They expect future life solely for those who are, in their phrase, "in Christ," "have passed from dead into living," "have been born again," who have been made "new creatures." They assume throughout that this kind of man has, through his affections and his conscience, reached to a stage of psychical being which differentiates him from the "natural" man. They expect immortality for him, not because he is a "man," but because he has become something more. "They are of the kosmos: we are of God." "They are animals, not having the spirit: we look, in the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, for æonian life." Whether their contention be valid or not, it is surely plain enough.

The earliest letters of St. Paul are those two written to the little group of converts which he had made a few years previously in Thessalonica. By the time when he began to write, the belief appears to have gained general currency among the Christians, that Christ's plan was to reappear while his friends still lived, gather them out of the world, and then make an end of all things, to rebuild the kosmos and open a new régime. They believed the fact of his own resurrection, but they had not come to see the place of that fact in the economy of life's progress. This belief colors all the earlier New Testament writings. It was a naïve error which only death and the passing of the years could cure. They believed that they had come into possession of a life of such quality that it would endure, but they saw at the same time that they were growing old physically. Presently the great missionary learned that his Thessalonian converts, whose expectations were the same as his own, were in distress and perplexity because some of their number who, with them, had been waiting the Lord's coming, had fallen asleep. Had they, in consequence, missed the immortality which they expected? St. Paul thereupon writes to reassure them. What he says and what he does not say are equally noteworthy. He has nothing to say to them about a universal resurrection and immortality. He writes: "I would not have you to be even agnostic concerning them that have fallen asleep, or that you should sorrow as do other people who have no hope for the dead. For as we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring back with him them that have fallen asleep in him. I assure you in God's truth, that we who will be alive at the Lord's coming, will not have any advantage over them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and first the dead in Christ shall rise; and then we that are alive, together with them, shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

He was still of the same opinion when he wrote the Thessalonians his second letter; but as the years went on, and the real teaching of his Master came to be better comprehended, he came to think of the new life less and less in connection with some great cosmic cataclysm, and more and more as the manifestation of a supreme vital force which would continue to operate according to its own laws to the end of the ages. The divine classic is that fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, which has for twenty centuries been read by Christian charity over the dead bodies of saints and sinners alike. It is a marvelous construction of science, poetry, faith, reason, and high aspiration. But it concerns itself solely with the "dead in Christ," that is with those whose spiritual natures are akin to his. The "natural" man is left outside its conclusions by express terms. If anyone questions this, let him read it, but let him read it all. When he has read that "as in 'Adam' all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive," let him read on, "But each in his own order; Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ's at his appearing; and that is the end." The drama is closed and the stage finally cleared before the "natural" man has any place upon it. "That which is natural comes first, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthen; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthen, such are they also that are earthen; and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly. As *we* have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly. For I declare this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: neither doth the corruptible inherit incorruption."

I am painfully aware that all this will seem to some to be an unwarranted attempt to read into St. Paul's words a meaning which they will not bear. I can only urge, in reply, that this seems to me the natural and obvious meaning, and the only meaning which those to whom the letter was addressed could have found in it. And this conviction is established by the fact that this meaning squares with the fundamental biological purpose of the Gospel of Christ. The quintessence of the matter is that life in its supreme phase conforms to the law of life at all its stages. It is a thing to be achieved. At every step there are a thousand candidates who fail for one who attains. Those who attain remain in possession while they fulfill the conditions of the order where they are. Except a molecule of matter be born from above it cannot enter into life. Except the living animal be born from above it cannot become man. Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. That is not first which is Spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards, that which is spiritual.

The later books of the New Testament, such as the Revelation of St. John and the apocalyptic portion of St. Matthew's gospel, throw little or no light upon the question before us. The Apocalypse is obscure because it was meant to be obscure. The writers put in cryptogram things which it was not safe for the Christians to discuss openly. No doubt it was generally intelligible to those to whom it was addressed, but the key has long been lost. It is probable that the imagery of the Book of Revelation, colored by the gorgeous but fine frenzied imaginations of Dante and Milton, have done more than anything else to shape and fix the popular ideas concerning resurrection and the other life.

The misfortune is that poetry has been taken to be revelation and imagery for reality. But, however firmly these Oriental pictures may be fixed in the popular mind, their reality has never been accepted as part of the Christian faith. The creed is content with declaring that we "believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." No public creed earlier than the middle of the fourth century contains the clause, "the resurrection of the body." The dramatic framework in which this process is set in apocalyptic scripture may be helpful or may be confusing, just in proportion as one is or is not able to discriminate between the truth and the imagery. No end of error has been caused by confusing the one with the other. From this has come that series of mental pictures of universal death; an underworld wherein all souls as phantoms wait through the ages; an universal resurrection; a spectacular judgment; a procession of redeemed to Elysium and of condemned to Tartarus. Unless one's thought can escape out of this Doré gallery altogether, it will seek in vain for a reasonable as well as a religious and holy hope of life beyond.

Birds which are bred in subarctic regions must perish unless they become able at the proper time to cross sea and land to a summer clime. Whether anyone of them shall be able to do this depends upon its growth of wing, its sense of direction, its vigor to sustain its flight. Between the one who can and the one who cannot is a difference of a few millimeters length of pinion and a few grains more or less of nourishment.

If we believe in the advance of the individual man from the kind of life he now possesses to an enduring one, the passage must depend upon the vigor of his moral personality. Is there any reason to believe that such a passage has ever been accomplished? Has a man ever died and lived again? Mythology and folklore are full of such alleged instances. But in sober reality has such a thing ever happened? A single instance would be worth more than volumes of argument. It would bring the whole matter out of the abstract into the concrete. Moreover it would transform with a new hope the lives of all to whom such information might come. If we could find one single instance of a man's having passed through corporeal death and having therefore shown himself to living man by word or sight or touch that he is the same personality who died, it would revolutionize human life. Above all, if he should give an intelligible account of the transaction, the riddle of the universe would be read. It would be as though someone had found a practicable ford across an encompassing river which had always been unfordable. It would change the whole temper and manner of life of those who live on this side. It would bring hope concerning the fate of that multitude who had essayed to cross and had seemed to have perished.

There is one and only one such case which can be seriously considered. Can it? There are now living hundreds of millions of people who believe that such an event occurred two thousand years ago between a Friday evening and a Sunday morning in the city of Jerusalem and that the man's name was Jesus. The thoughtful man of to-day, the student of evidence feels like turning away with impatience at the suggestion. The event is so remote, the contemporary evidence is so scanty and so contradictory, the assertion is so incredible that busy men cannot be expected to take it seriously. Maybe so. This is my own feeling at the first approach. It is more than likely that a very moderate cross-examination would break down every witness. But it cannot be dismissed so easily. Hundreds of millions of people have believed and do believe it to have been a real occurrence. These, also, are people whose average intelligence is upon the whole higher than that of any equal number of people in the world. Nor do any like number of people equal them in moral earnestness or general truthfulness. Moreover, alleged facts are to be tested in some degree by their effects. Now, the world in Christ's time did not look for a future life of the individual: to-day it looks for it even more universally than the facts warrant. What has caused this change of outlook? The cause is so evident that no student of history questions it. It is due to the assured conviction that men saw Jesus, recognized him and spoke with him after his death. Of course if one take the position that the alleged fact is in its nature impossible and that no kind or amount of evidence would convince him, there is nothing to say except that he is a dogmatist to whom science cannot speak. There is such a thing as a credulity of denial as well as of assertion. The sensible man tries to avoid them both, to look at things as they present themselves and to accept the explanation which best explains. It should also be borne in mind that the question involved is not of the "supernatural" as opposed to the "natural." If Jesus survived his own death it was because it was natural for him to do so. The antithesis of natural and supernatural is a mere imagination. The only true classification is the real and the unreal. Whatever is found to be real is also natural, for, however unlikely it has seemed, when once its reality is established the definition of nature must be extended to include it.

If there be any avenue for me or any man through the gate of death it can only be one which lies within the natural order of the universe. There can no more be two universes than there can be two Gods. Nature has secrets and possibilities only now beginning to be imagined, much less discovered. I believe that what we call the Resurrection will be found to lie within those possibilities.

The story is scanty and in parts incoherent, but I know of no scholar who questions its good faith. More than five hundred of Jesus' friends who knew him in life believed they had seen him after his death. Just what they saw we will have to inquire carefully in the light of modern physics.

The disciples were not looking for his reappearance and were slow to believe it when it occurred. After his execution they abandoned all expectation of seeing fulfilled the program of a "Kingdom" they had looked forward to. They were grievously disappointed and believed their disappointment to be irremediable. They gave it all up and started about their various businesses. They thought this was he who should have redeemed Israel, but he had died and their dream was at an end. Had they fabricated the story, they would have excused their incredulity by pleading that they had misunderstood his intentions. *Something happened* suddenly which changed the whole situation and changed their whole lives. It is not too much to say that it has changed the character and the outlook of the dominant portion of the human race. No alleged fact of such stupendous consequences can be ignored by history or science any more than by religion.

What was it that did happen? The vulgar answer is that the dead body of Jesus came to life again and the observers' senses convinced them of the fact. But this is not the impression or at any rate is not the whole impression which the story produces when carefully examined. It is very curious that in every case the persons to whom Jesus appeared failed at first to recognize him. The two Marys say that when they came to the sepulcher early Sunday morning to prepare the body for burial they found it gone, and they saw either one or two luminous apparitions of some sort—their accounts do not agree—who in some way conveyed to them the impression that they must go at once and tell Peter and John, the two most intimate friends of the dead man. They say they were frightened beyond measure and bewildered. It would seem that one of them hurried into town to tell what she had seen, while the other waited hesitatingly to see what farther might befall. While she thus stood, Jesus in some form appeared. She had known him intimately and had seen him day before yesterday, but when she saw him now she did not recognize him, "supposing him to be the gardener." When he spoke something revealed his identity; but when she would have verified her sight and hearing by touching him, he forbade her. Two of the disciples returned with the other Mary to see what had happened, but before they reached the garden Jesus met them, spoke to them in his own peculiar way and made a rendezvous with them later in another province. The next day while on the way to the rendezvous and talking as they walked, they suddenly found a stranger walking beside them. He joined in their conversation, stayed with them all afternoon, sat down at supper with them; but when it came to the actual eating he vanished, and as he vanished they recognized him.

The following Sunday night while a number of his friends were at supper together, with the doors carefully barred for fear of being arrested as conspirators, he suddenly asked for food—and vanished. A week later he did the same thing under similar circumstances. Always "when they saw him they worshiped, but some were sceptical." They do not seem to have been able to make anything coherent out of his appearances. They were satisfied of his continued existence. They believed that he had reappeared but this appearance had at first no meaning or purpose to them.

I do not stop here to dwell upon the strange character of these wraithlike appearances. They seem to have been material, but of matter in some form or of some kind outside our experience. I think it will be possible later on to bring them into relation with those newly found potentialities of matter of which I have already spoken. But meanwhile, I am the more impressed with the effect of this strange phenomenon on human life and human history.

Assuming as we must that the story is an honest one, it is a very strange one. Apart from its effects we would only look at it a little for its curiosity and then dismiss it. Two considerations, however, preclude us from dealing with it after this rough and ready fashion. First, because it is related to the previous life of a personality which is altogether remarkable. And second, because wherever the story has gone it has transformed human life. This story is the core and essential element of Christianity. Its early apostles and evangelists preached in set terms the "Gospel of the Resurrection." Their burden was not atonement or redemption or heaven or hell as is presently assumed; it was the announcement of possible immortality. This is what gained them their hearing. It was "good news" because first of all it was news. We lose sight of reality when we assume that the goodness of the news lay in the fact that a way had been opened whereby all men, who must necessarily live forever in any case, might live blissfully instead of painfully. But the good news was not this. This was not what Jesus or Paul meant by salvation. They meant the offer of æonian life to those who would otherwise perish out of existence. This was its attraction. Men who could comprehend the good news welcomed it with the same kind of eagerness as would a man to-day to whom a plan were unfolded whereby he could certainly add fifty, a hundred, a thousand years to his natural life. The message of the apostles was that in the career of Jesus "immortality was brought to light." Paul says plainly that if his Gospel should break down at this point it would be worthless. Even though Jesus might have lived and taught and suffered as he did, "if he be not risen then is your faith but emptiness." This is his supreme value to the world not his teaching. That added little or nothing to what the world already possessed. There is nothing in Precepts or Beatitudes which had not been pronounced, many times. Nor was his martyrdom for the truth unique. The thing of supreme value was the news that he had definitely realized the process whereby a natural human being might attain to the possession of a psychical life so exalted in quality and so tenacious in substance that corporeal death could not break it up; that he had achieved it for himself at an incalculable cost; that so he had passed through death and conquered it having shown himself alive by many infallible proofs; and that he had thus become a kind of first fruit of a human harvest which might be great or small as the event should prove.

It is probably quite impossible for us to realize with what enthusiasm the message was at first received or how overwhelmingly it took possession of the minds and imaginations of men who before had no expectation of a future existence of any kind. The early martyrs faced the lions and the stake not for a creed but for a life. They believed it was better to die even in torment than to risk final extinction. The original appeal of the Gospel was to the supreme aspiration of all organized beings, the lust of living. It offered extended existence to those who had expected destruction. This appeal is infinitely more potent than the addresses by the evangelist to-day, to the desire for happiness or the fear of misery. It explains at once the eager welcome given the Gospel at first, and the languid acceptance accorded it now. It was literally a proffered alternative of life or death. No wonder Paul accounted "all things but dung that he might know Christ and the power of his resurrection and attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And little wonder that men to-day who have fallen into the way of thinking that they are immortal anyway, will snatch at the pleasure of the life which now is, and trust to good fortune to escape any very intolerable misery in that which is to come. Upon this attitude it is hard to see how the message of the preacher to-day can make much impression.

To follow it involves cost and lays a cross. To disregard it leaves the way open to present enjoyment. The allurement of a present pleasure is usually a more potent stimulus than the apprehension of a remote pain. But if it be true that the stake at issue is neither pleasure nor pain of life but the life itself the situation becomes tragic. The Gospel contained in the "Resurrection" of Christ is, therefore, the last term in an evolutionary process which begins in chaos and old night and reaches its culmination, not in *Homo Sapiens,* but in man become immortal. The process is as inexorable as it is benificent. The gift is strewn with a lavish hand. But every creature receives so much as it can appropriate, and no more. In this there is no inequity. This is Nature's way, and Nature's way is God's way. This is "The Way of Life" from the protoplasmic slime to the Son of Man.

*"There are thinkers who, because the phenomena of life and consciousness are associated in their minds by uniform experience with the action of material organs, think it an absurdity per se to imagine it possible that those phenomena can exist under any other conditions. But they should remember that the uniform coexistence of one fact with another does not make the one fact a part of the other or the same with it. The relation of thought to the brain is no metaphysical necessity, but simply a constant coexistence within the limits of observation."*

JOHN STUART MILL

# CHAPTER VII

The state of being in which men now find themselves is often spoken of as a "life of probation." The phrase is misleading; indeed, one might well denounce it as mischievous. The crude notion which it represents is that men are allowed in this life a sort of preliminary course of moral action, with a public examination at the end of it, upon the result of which will be determined a final and fixed status of eternal existence which shall be without any element of probation. The conception is legal and mechanical, and is one which can have no application to vital processes. It is true that this life is one of probation, but then it is true that the next life must also be so. That is to say, living is always "on probation." The living creature at any stage remains alive so long and only so long as it conforms to the conditions of living. An "unconditioned" life for a finite creature is a contradiction in thought. It matters not at all under what circumstances such a life is thought of as unfolding itself, it must still be under conditions. The life of a tree, a beast, or a man, the life here or yonder, can never be otherwise than upon probation. But the terms of the probation are never artifical but always natural. They cannot be represented by imagery drawn from the procedure of a trial in a court, but only by biological ideas such as "conformity to environment" and "survival of the fit." This law must needs hold wherever and whenever life is. There cannot but be a "future probation," but it is vital and not judicial.

It would be much nearer the reality to say that for the individual this life is a time of gestion. This life would seem to bear a relation to the one to come analogous to that which the period of embryonic development bears to this one. The living, individual human form may with truth be regarded as a matrix or womb within which another form may have been quickened and be slowly maturing. Indeed, the analogy is so complete as to be startling. The laws and processes of all life are probably better seen in the study of embryology than anywhere else. There a life is built up within a life. Its foundation is laid in an already existent life. Its material and psychic stuff is derived through an organism surrounding it, but are not identical with that organism. It is separable from the parent form, and outlasts it. Its future development may immeasurably surpass the one within which it is for the time spent. We may therefore think of the "new man" as one who may perdure through and after the dissolution of the frame which now is, being compounded of psychical and ethereal stuff, derived through and builded up within the present individual man. He has been begotten in the secret places of the present individual, and death is not his conception but his new birth.

But we cannot leave the subject here. We have interrogated nature and revelation to find a place where the individual man may, if he achieve so much, cross over from the life that now is to another. We have become satisfied that the passage is possible for those who possess the requisite spiritual vigor, and that the bridge has in at least one instance been safely passed. We have found reasonable ground to believe that conscious human personality may and does in some way hold commerce with other personalities through channels which are no doubt material, but composed of matter different from that which the laws of physics generally deal. We have seen that this whole conception conforms strikingly to the analogies within our present knowledge, and have come to believe that the universe is a more spacious place than had been feared. Admitting it to be true, therefore, that in God's house are many mansions, and that the door by which one passes from his present habitation may swing into another for him who has now the key, one is at liberty to ask, What mode of life may be expected there? Future life, to be personal life at all, must be continuous with that which now is. One must begin again where he leaves off. But this implies the passage into the other life of men at all stages of development, provided only they have been developed far enough in any case to make the transit possible. The law of growth and progress, with the concomitant possibility of degeneration and death, must be carried over with them, and must hold wherever living creatures are. One may not affirm that the next life is an "endless" one for those who attain it, any more than this one is. It has its own laws of being, and the obverse of every law is a penalty, and the ultimate penalty everywhere is destruction.

But under the conditions of the ethereal life, moral development must needs be both more certain and more swift than under those of mortal life. The power of moral choice must remain, and to live rightly still demand the strenuous will. It must demand it all the more there, the life being endued with such indefinitely increased capacities. But there can be no breach of personal continuity. Death can only make evident what the actual condition of the individual is. He that was holy is holy still. He that was filthy is filthy still. But there are degrees in moral corruption. It may have been so all pervading in one that physical death only served to break up the body, out of which the spirit had long since perished for lack of a suitable home. Says St. James, "She that liveth in sin is dead already." Or, the new man may pass on carrying with him moral faultiness, real, though not so enwoven with the fabric of his being but that it may be purged and eliminated by the discipline of the new life, which lays on few stripes or many, as the need may be. The ethereal universe shall still hide secrets which thought will find its joy in discovering. Being a human world, the inhabitants thereof can but live humanly.

To the lover full fruition
Of an unexhausted joy;
To the warrior, crowned ambition
With no envy's base alloy.

A practial question still remains to be considered. No moral or religious belief can be adopted or rejected without some regard to the effect which it may naturally be expected to produce upon the conduct of those who entertain it. How will the doctrine of Immortability as distinguished from immortality affect men's moral life? If we say to them, "You are not necessarily immortal, but you may become so if you set about it properly," and if they believe us, will they be the better or the worse for it? Of course the intrinsic truth of the doctrine does not depend upon any such consideration. That must stand or fall on other ground. If it be true, men must adjust themselves to it as best they may. Truth is neither made nor unmade by an estimate of its consequences. But, at the same time, when one is endeavoring to determine whether or not such a proposition be true, he cannot but be influenced, more or less, by his judgment upon its practical result one way or the other.

It is quite commonly taken for granted that a general belief in the necessary immortality of all men, with the proffer of an eternal heaven and the threat of an eternal hell, is essential to the moral order of society. It is unquestionable that this common belief has been a powerful deterrent from evil living at some times and within certain limited areas. It operated thus in Europe during the Middle Ages, and it does so in the territory of Islam to-day. But all will agree that the righteousness thus evoked has been and is of a very unsatisfactory quality.

> The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order.

It has never succeeded in being more than that. Reward and penalty have been exploited to the utmost for moral purposes. The joys of heaven have been painted in forms most attractive and colors most ravishing, the picture of hell with its lurid torments has been drawn by the hands of the world's most transcendent geniuses. But the result has always been amazingly meager in its effect upon men's conduct. While it has fired a few with an ecstatic longing and overwhelmed a few in a deadly terror, the great multitude, even while they assent to the truth of the doctrine, live as though it were non-existent. In our own time it may well be doubted whether its effect upon conduct is even appreciable. Eighty years ago Frederick W. Robertson noted that "future retribution has become a kind of figment. Hell is in the world of shadows. The tone in which educated men speak of it still is often only that of good-humored condescension which makes allowances for childish superstition." It is generally allowed even by the most orthodox that the exploitation of a "material" heaven and a "material" hell has been a mistake. But what they do not appear to notice is the fact that when the "material" element is eliminated from the idea, nothing is left of it. If it is not material, it is nothing. Its practical effect, where it has had any, has been due to the way in which it has either allured or frighted the imagination. But to do this it must be presented in forms which the imagination can present before itself. If its form be left out its substance vanishes. The attempt to substitute purely spiritual pleasures and spiritual agonies for the crude glories of heaven and the crude horrors of hell must always remain unsuccessful. In point of fact, the whole presentation of future reward and penalty has ceased to move. The awards and the sentences are felt to be irrelevant. The whole scheme is mechanical and artificial. It rests upon presumptions which are so essentially unreasonable and inequitable that advance in intelligence and moral sincerity renders them intolerable. The classification of "righteous" and "wicked" is the merest figment. No objective fact corresponds to it. If it be assumed that all men without regard to their stage of moral development pass on into another life, which is endless by its very nature, the sense of fair dealing demands that each should be left unclassified and undoomed until the end of his line of moral movement. This is indeed the explicit teaching of Christ, concerning those who are capable of passing on at all. The wheat and the tares grow together until the end of the æon, and then the wheat is gathered into the garner, and the tares are thrown into the fire to be destroyed. But this natural process of life, growth, and development, culminating finally in stable being or in disintegration, has nothing in common with the scheme of probation, trial, judgment, acquittal and sentence which has lost what power it ever possessed to influence life. It is the plain fact that whenever the belief becomes current that a future life of some sort is assured for all in any event, men will conclude to wait until that life is reached before beginning any very strenuous effort to determine its character.

As a matter of fact, belief in future life for all men and disbelief in future life for any man are alike morally ineffective.

If, on the other hand, we follow the teaching of Christ and of nature, we find a moral dynamic which is quite incalculable, and from which there is no escape. Compared with its dire discovery of disaster following in the path of moral offense, the threat of hell is but as the rattling of a medicine man's gourd. Let a man once see that the alternative which confronts him at every step of his moral progression is life or death, that his task is, as Christ says, "to win for himself a soul," or, at a farther stage, it is "to save his soul alive," and he will realize that he is face to face with realities and not with an extraneous arrangement arbitrarily established. The appeal is to that deepest, strongest, most persistent of all desires, the love of life. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." It need hardly be repeated that he cannot die unless he have first become alive. But when once moral consciousness has been reached by the individual, its instinct of self-preservation may confidently be depended upon to induce strenuous action to protect itself from death, unless it be misled by some outside assurance that death is not for it a possible issue. It may well be that suicide is possible for a human being at every stage of its history, here or yonder. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive the possibility of a conscious personality being kept alive against its own determination to make an end of itself. Such a condition of existence would seem to contradict the very idea of personality. It is possible that God may be no more able to force a man to live than to force him to love. There are places where coercion defeats itself. Certainly it is true now that every man holds in his hand the power to slay himself if he so wills. One wonders sometimes why the power is not more frequently used. Hamlet was mistaken in his explanation: 'tis not "the dread of something after death, which makes us rather bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of." 'Tis not because "resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The resolve upon self-destruction is reached even more reluctantly by the brutal savage who has no thought of anything lying beyond than it is by the educated man whose imagination is crowded with pictures of post-obituary horrors. The elemental instinct of living may be trusted to keep one from making his own quietus wherever he may be. The horror of ceasing to be is a far more powerful emotion than the fear of damnation:

> That sense of ruin which is worse than pain
> That masterful negation and collapse
> Of all that makes me man: as tho I bent
> Over the dizzy brink
> Of sheer, infinite descent
> Or worse, as though
> Down, down, forever I was falling through
> The solid framework of created things,
> And needs must sink
> Into the vast abyss.

This inescapable horror is the unique experience of man. He may disguise it, accept it, jest at it, forget it, damn it, according to his mood, but it is the overmastering fact of his existence. It increases in proportion as his nature climbs and expands. The brute knows it not, the brutelike man is touched by it little, if at all. If fear be needed at all, or be efficacious at all to the evocation of goodness, here is a form of disaster having a potency compared with which the threat of hell is but a bogie to frighten children. Let one think as lightly as he pleases of the joys of heaven or the pains of hell, "the law hath yet another hold upon him." The law is that same inexorable one which operates throughout the whole kingdom of living things. The continuance of any individual in being is dependent upon his conforming to the requirements of life at the stage where he is. St. Paul has set out in the most accurate statement what are the laws for the kind of beings, which most of us have come to be. When one has reached to that point of moral progress which he describes by the phrase "being in Christ Jesus," he has passed out from under the inferior law binding upon creatures who have not reached so far. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life. The mind of the flesh is not subject to this higher law of God, indeed, it cannot be. But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, provided that the spirit of God inhabiteth you. If the Christ is in you the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead be in you, he that raiseth up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through the spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye are bound to die, but if by the spirit ye mortify the action of the body ye shall live."

This is the key to the marvelous welcome with which the world hailed the "good news of the Gospel of Resurrection"; to the languid indifference with which the gospel of deliverance from hell is received to-day; to the new enthusiasm for righteousness which might be expected to burst out once more if men were brought to see that holiness is the very path to abiding life.

I am well aware that the consolation derived from the considerations set forth in this book differ much from the "reasonable, religious and holy hope" which satisfies many better men. But I console myself by thinking that if it seem less religious and holy it may commend itself as more reasonable. Job's question still challenges: "If a man die shall he live again?" I do not know; no one knows. But, as Bishop Butler said, "probability is the rule of life," and here is probability and something more. My conscious Ego lives enmeshed in Nature. She claims me as her own. I live within her; must I perish within her? She does not answer. She is the sphinx, with teeming breasts and rending claws, equally fitted to nourish or destroy. The resurrection of my body is both incredible and undesirable. Conscious existence as a "disembodied spirit is unthinkable. So, imprisoned and in despair of escape from this closed ring of Nature, I turn upon my jailor and demand of her from out of her inexhaustible resources the wherewithal for continued being.

It may be that thus I follow the Risen Christ.

The belief is steadily deepening that that strange thing which we call "life" is not a stranger entering the material universe at some point in its history, but is a home product built from the resources of matter and energy. When somewhere by a happy choice suitable elements found themselves commingled in the presence of chemical forces and natural energies, there was produced something which was as one might say between living and not living. The chemist and the physicist can produce the like substance to-day. There began that action and interaction of matter and life, evolving continually more and more stable and definite forms, filling earth and sea and air with living things, culminating in that curiously compounded clay which we are ourselves.

Now that nature has done so much—brought me to where I am—can I look to her for anything further? Having brought me into being has she any resources by which to keep me in being? I hardly need to say that I use the word "nature" to personify the powers and forces which operate in the Universe. These may be and no doubt are the agents of the supreme and universal energy which we call God. But it is within and by the operation of these forces that I can look for continued existence. It avails me nothing to be told that Christ rose from the dead unless much more be said. If he be conceived of as a "supernatural" being my experience and his lie in different planes. Nothing which happened to him has any relation to me. If he be conceived of as a man, then assuming the fact that he emerged alive from death, he becomes in very deed "the first fruits of them that slept." When therefore his "appearances" are brought into relation with the newly discovered properties and possibilities of matter, with the dynamic of moral goodness and set as the final link in the living chain which binds together the monad and the man, they take on a significance not to be disregarded. His rôle is not that of a *deux ex machina,* as it is generally conceived. He offers it as one capable of being played by any man who has developed the moral energy needful.

The outstanding conquest of this age is its discoveries in the nature of matter. Its qualities and potencies have proved amazing. Moreover, the physicist and the psychologist have followed their eager quests along converging lines until at their meeting point they find matter and spirit to be undistinguishable. Each in its ultimate form may be either. Surely the universe, which we call material but which we might as truly call spiritual, can from its infinite resources furnish forth all that is needful for continued existence. The white ant, by chemical and physical means inconceivable to us, can produce from indentical eggs a dozen creatures as seemingly different from each other as sheep from fowls. The subtle emanations from the endocrine glands play upon and modify both the spirit and the grosser matter of the organ. The insect lives and works by senses we cannot even imagine. The germ plasm pursues its patient way through the successive generations, abiding its time to transmute the whole organism. The enzymes in the bodily processes, the electric energy, radio activity and the like phenomena lately brought to light all show that another universe surrounds, invades and interpenetrates this one which our senses recognize. That universe is "material" but compounded of matter of whose properties we get only fleeting glimpses. But this matter is evidently closely concerned with vital processes and it is the nexus and the medium which connects earthly phenomenon with the whole universe.

In fine, I find my hope of an embodied future—and a disembodied consciousness is unthinkable—in the inexhaustible resources of this universe, of which we know so little and glimpse so much.

Strangely this whole argument was set forth nineteen centuries ago and strangely its plain meaning has been persistently misread. St. Paul writes with confidence and scientific precision: "Some one will ask how do the dead rise? What kind of body do they have when they come? Foolish man: what you saw is not the body that is to be: it is a mere grain of wheat or some other grain. God gives it a body as he pleases, gives to each kind of seed a body of its own. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. What is sown is mortal, what rises is immortal. It is sown an animate body, it rises a spiritual body. There is an animate body. There is also a spiritual body. As man the material is, so are the material; as man the heavenly is, so are the heavenly. Thus as we have born the likeness of the material man so we are to bear the likeness of the heavenly man. For this perishing body must be invested with the imperishable, and this mortal body invested with immortality."[1]

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[1] Moffat's Translation.

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